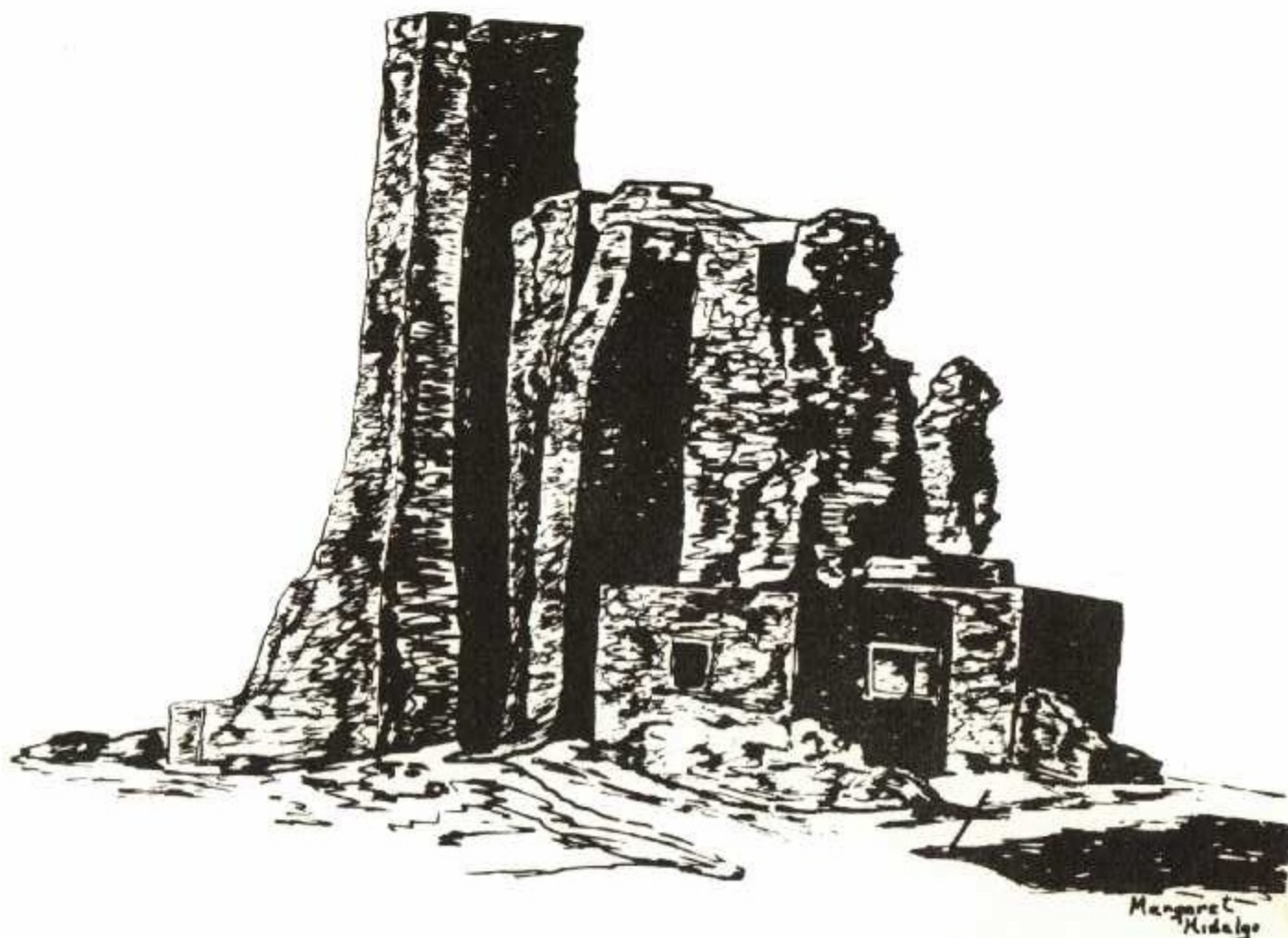


# El Rio Abajo

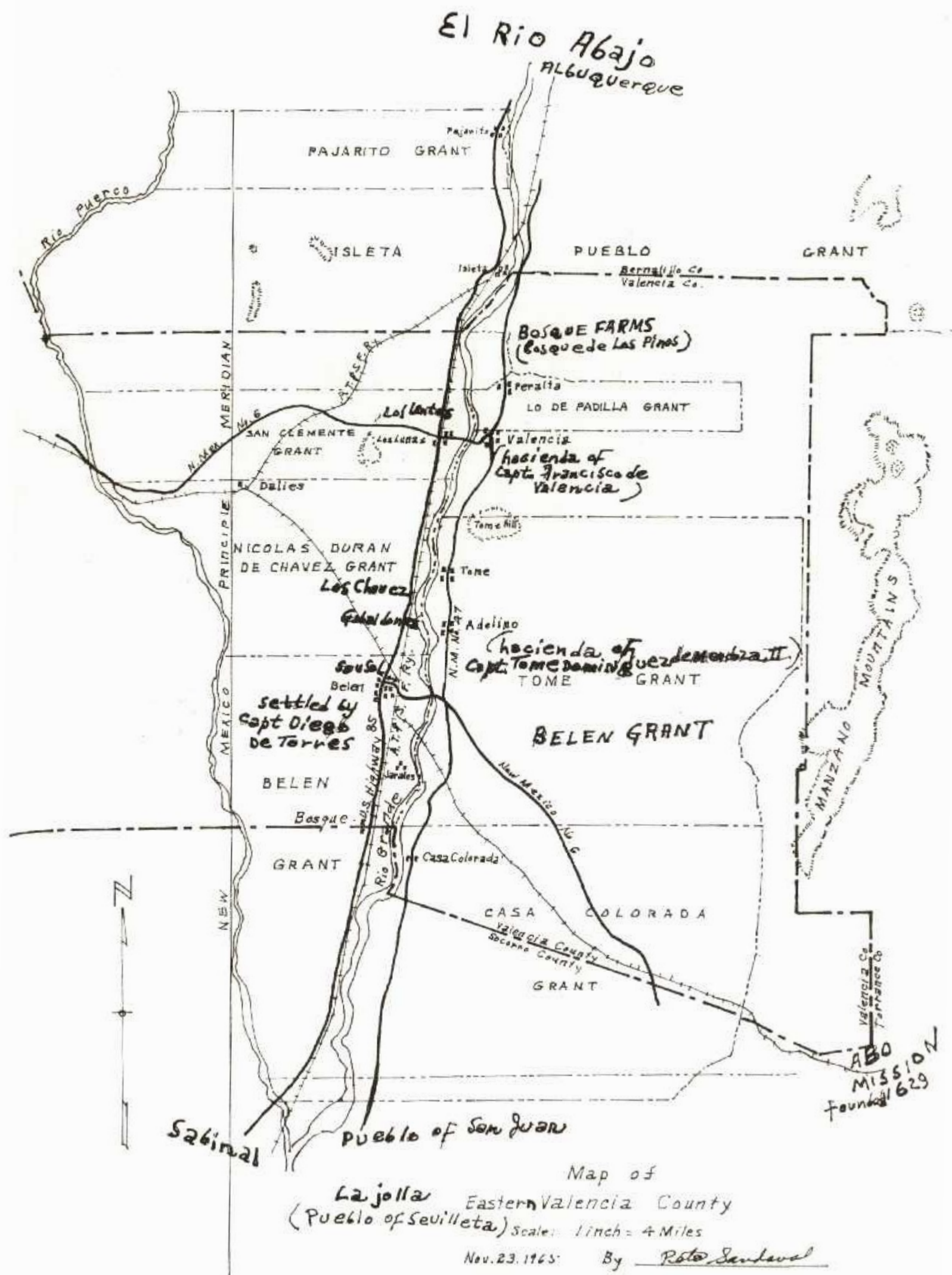


Franciscan mission of Abo located east of Belen in the Manzano Mountains. The first mission among the Piro Indians of the Salinas was established in 1629 by Fray Francisco de Acevedo who died and was buried at the mission.

By GILBERTO ESPINOSA

TIBO J. CHAVEZ

CARTER M. WAID, Editor



Map of Modern Rio Grande Valley  
superimposed on 17th Century Rio Abajo settlements



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Senator Tibo J. Chavez, a lawyer, is a native of Belen. He is a descendant of the original families that settled the Rio Abajo. He is married to the former Betty Caperton. The Chavezes have four sons, Chris, Reggie, Tibo, Jr., and David. Senator Chavez has served in the New Mexico State Senate for many years and is a former Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico. He feels that it is imperative to preserve the precious heritage and the history of the Rio Abajo (Lower Valley) for future generations.

Gilberto Espinosa, Albuquerque attorney, has practiced his profession in Albuquerque since graduation from Georgetown Law School in 1921. He has served on numerous State Boards including the State Museum, State Game Commission, and was one of the Directors of the 1940 Cuarto Centennial Celebration. For the period of his adult life he has been a student and writer on historical subjects, particularly of the Spanish Southwest. In 1932 he translated from Spanish rhyme to English prose the 1910 History of New Mexico by Gaspar Perez de Villagra Vol. 4 Quivira Society publications. Mr. Espinosa is the author of numerous Articles and Reviews on Southwestern history. He is presently historian of the Albuquerque Historical Society.

Carter M. Waid, editor, is a native of Oklahoma. He has been engaged in newspaper and radio work for 35 years. He was publisher of the Belen News-Bulletin, local newspaper, for 13 years and he became founder and owner of KARS radio of Belen. He is a past president of the New Mexico Press Association and a past director of the New Mexico Broadcasters Association. He is the author of numerous magazine articles, and served overseas during World War II in the Office of War Information for about 18 months in England and on the European Continent. He is present mayor of Belen.



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NUESTRA SENORA DE BELEN AND ADJACENT  
SETTLEMENTS OF THE RIO ABAJO

---

FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT

---

“Vamos todos a Belen  
Con Amor y Gozo  
Adoremos al Senor  
Nuestro Redentor”

“Let us all go to Belen  
On this Christmas Morn.  
Let us all rejoice and sing,  
Christ the Savior is born”

(Free Translation of an old folk verse)

By GILBERTO ESPINOSA

TIBO J. CHAVEZ

CARTER M. WAID, Editor



## INTRODUCTION

When the authors first conceived the idea of writing this story, their main attention centered on Belen today, outstanding among the cities of the Rio Abajo. On the west bank of the Rio Grande, Belen is 18 miles south of historic Isleta Pueblo and is in the near shadow of Albuquerque, first city of our State. It is to this city Belen owes its birth, and has from infancy to adult years been constantly identified. All this convinced us that our title and subject called for expansion.

As we delved into its story, we soon realized that we could not confine our story to Belen alone, since its story is inseparably identified at every turn of the road with that of the entire region of the Rio Abajo from Isleta Pueblo on the north to Sabinal on the South. Belen, qualified as a Royal Town Grant settlement on November 15, 1740, was for a brief period under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Isleta. However, it soon assumed its proper identity as the core center of all settlements in this area. There were scattered "Haciendas" and groups of settlers throughout this entire area long before Belen came into existence and even before the 1680 pueblo rebellion. It was after the Vargas Reconquest (1693) that these re-established areas assumed a new identity as Town Settlements, Land Grants and Haciendas.

Originally, in the 17th century, Tome was the farm of Tome Dominguez de Mendoza, who occupied it with his family and numerous retainers prior to the 1680 Rebellion. After this time, Don Tome Dominguez apparently had enough of New Mexico and did not return with the Vargas expedition. Some of his former retainers returned to their former abodes and in the year 1739 it was established as a Grant Town under the name of "La Limpia Concepcion de Tome." It is frequently referred to in records as "Fuenclara", "Tome Dominguez" and finally just Tome. Belen is frequently referred to in old maps and records as "Bethel" and as "Belem" and as "Santa Maria de Belen."

A few miles below Isleta was the northernmost settle-



ment of the Piro Indian reservation, along the Rio Grande. This settlement now known as La Joya, the Spaniards dubbed Sevilleta. In close vicinity, prior to the Rebellion, Captain Don Diego de Guadalajara had his "hacienda." A few miles south was the estate of Captain Francisco Valencia. After the Reconquest, these were settled as the towns of Sevilleta and of Valencia.

In relating this history, the authors have divided the record of this area into the following epochs: First, the Pre-Spanish.

Little is definitely known other than archeological and geological answers which are most detailed and we can assume are correct, and from aboriginal traditions. The Spanish period we divide into the First Colonial Period, which starts with the Conquest and Settlement of New Mexico by Don Juan de Onate in 1598, and ends with the Pueblo uprising of 1680; the Second Colonial Period which starts with the Vargas reconquest in 1693 and terminates with Mexican Independence in 1821; the Mexican period was of short duration (24) years from Independence to American Occupation in 1846.

American Occupation is the next epoch and it includes the brief period under Military government; the periods of the Mexican War, the Civil War period, and to Statehood in 1912, then finally to the modern history of Belen and this area of the Rio Abajo, to present time.

The history of every community is identified with the lives of those who direct its development. To extend proper recognition to all of those who merit is indeed a task for a mightier pen than the writers possess. We shall endeavor to pay tribute to representative men and women who contributed, by their life and efforts, to the development and progress of these communities and towns, among whom we mention a few, the Becker, Didier, Scholle and Huning families; Don Felipe Chavez, Doctors W. F. Wittwer, William Drummond Radcliffe and Tobias Espinosa; the Kempenich family of Peralta; the Oteros, the Lunas and the Tondres of Los Lunas. These are from the modern era and the naming of a few by no means indicates the debt of grati-



tude this region owes to the thousands of its loyal sons and daughters. A Belenite who typifies the present descendants of Spanish Colonials and Mexican citizens and the transition to the modern United States, is Don Jose Dolores Cordova, now over ninety years of age and one of the last links with the past.

In completing this history, the authors have consulted the best historical data, searching the Spanish and Mexican archives in Santa Fe, the University of New Mexico Coronado Library, wills, letters, documents and newspaper files. Innumerable interviews have been conducted with old-timers whose wealth of knowledge from personal experiences and incidents related to them by their fathers have provided a panorama of past generations.

Few footnotes will be used. Authorities consulted and quoted are duly listed and acknowledged. An Appendix contains statistical data.

Gilberto Espinosa

Tibo J. Chavez

Carter M. Waid



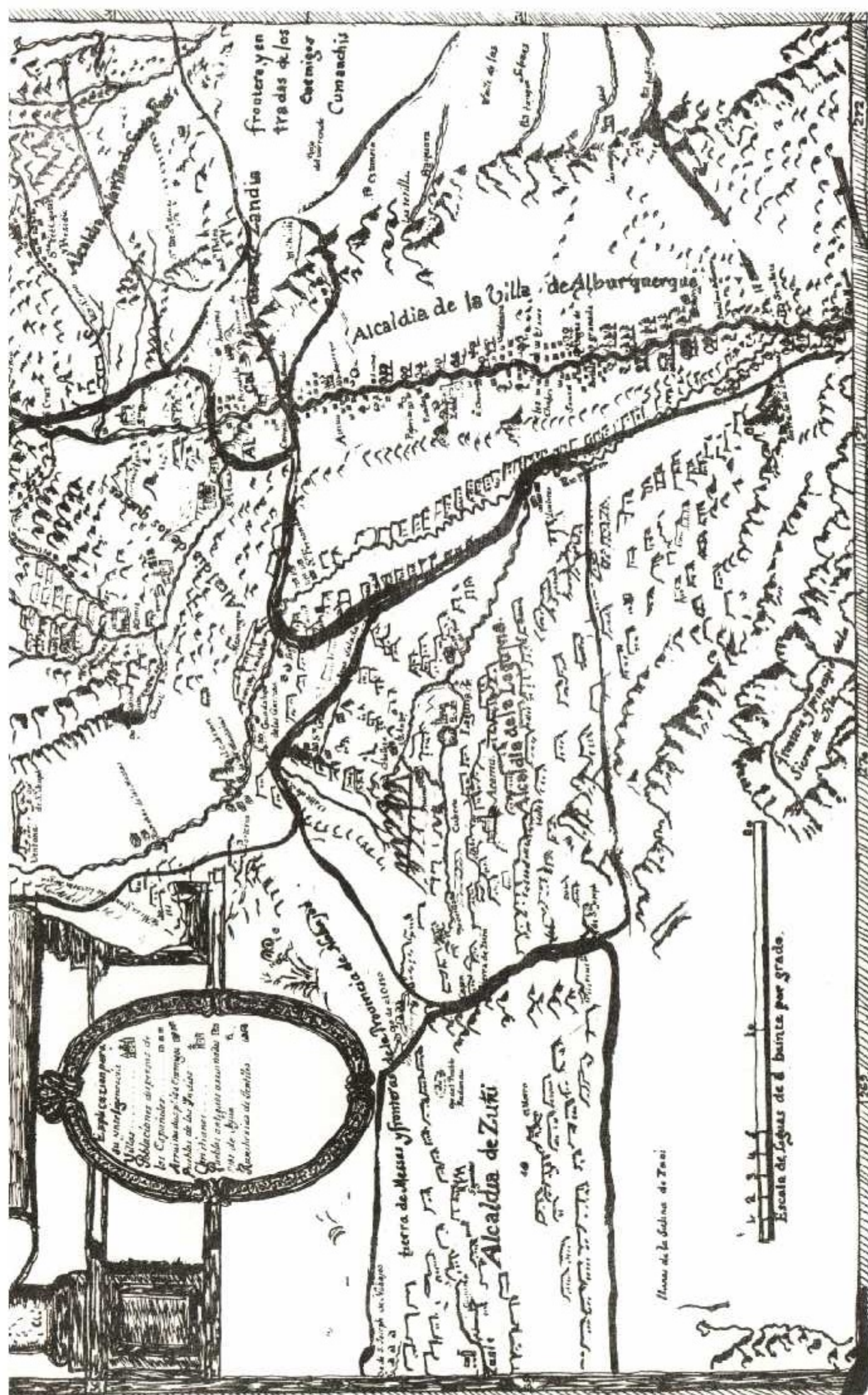
PLAT, showing the Internal Province of New Mexico, made under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel and Captain General of the Province, Don Juan de Anza, by BERNARDO MIERA Y PACHECO, distinguished soldier of the Royal Garrison of Santa Fe, with all its Towns as they now exist, very irregularly located and disantly dispersed, isolated from one another, the houses of the inhabitants of this badly planned area badly constructed although there has been validated to each of his own granted tract, nevertheless there has resulted damages, disaster and desolation of towns ravaged by the enemies, the Comanches and Apaches, who surround this Province, killing and carrying away many families which makes it necessary that with exactness and prompt obedience compliance be had of the Order given to the Senor Governor with such prudence, charity and zeal so that, informed of the extent of his territories and their disorderly condition, he may remedy the situation so that they remain in civilized stability and Christian policy, building their towns in form of a quadrangle, with at least twenty families in each, the houses in form of a fortress, the small ones with two ramparts the large ones with four and between embrasures for use of escopetas (muskets) when needed; it is not advisable to erect torreones (towers) as was the ancient usage because experience has taught us that the enemy seeks protection under these walls and tunnels under them and sets fires. As is

A short league from the banks of the river called Don Francisco, there were located twelve families with their dwellings. As is customary, they were warned the Comanches were coming to raid and they all gathered together in a large house belonging to Pablo de Vialpando, twelve armed men with fire arms and plenty of ammunition. The Comanches attacked intrepidly and with vigor; they huddled under the eaves of the house and the walls of the Torreón, safe and protected and began to breach walls and set fires and when the besieged to impede these tactics exposed their persons, young and old, of both sexes; more than eighty were killed. I make this narrative so that it may be clerally noted, the ferocity with which these enemies war. The Pueblos of Christian Indians exist in the same of political union and tranquility and with the same friendliness as when the Spaniards first found them, with their houses joined, of two and three stories, forming a Plaza and all with portable ladders which they lift up when attacked, and the terraces and roof tops high and when needed, it is not extraordinary that they use them for defense against the enemy or offense.

DONE at this Villa of Santa Fe. Capital of the Province, Year of 1775.











La Joya Church, known as Nuestra Senora de Los Dolores. This church is located in the Sevilleta Land Grant. It was originally the land of the Piro Indians. Many of these pueblos were later destroyed by nomadic tribes, the Apaches and Comanches.



The San Juan Mission Church. Juan de Onate, the colonizer, discovered the Indian Pueblo on June 24, 1598, on the patron saint's day of San Juan. The modern town of San Juan is located in the same general area as the old San Juan Pueblo.



## CHAPTER I

### PRE-SPANISH TIMES

Near Belen, New Mexico, with a minimum of search, can be found a pottery shard, an occasional flint arrow point, or a broken "metate" — mute evidence of human habitation in days that time has forgotten.

From a spot, almost in the back yard of Tibo J. Chavez, one of the co-authors of this volume, may be viewed a vast panorama. Viewed from the brow of the sand hills, just across the acequia to the west, this scene is framed by the lofty Manzano mountain range, and on the west by broad mesa lands which extend to the Rio Puerco.

Between the Manzanos to the east and the mesa to the west, the meandering Rio Grande winds its way south through cultivated fields and communities.

For centuries untold, the Valley of the Rio del Norte, from San Marcial in the south to Taos in the north, was the home of countless generations of peaceful people — the Indian ancestors of those aborigines the Spaniard met when he entered these regions more than four centuries ago.

These early Indians lived in settlements, consisting mainly of houses built of adobe. They cultivated the soil, worked at their primitive arts and crafts, practiced an established religion, and carried on their lives under the protection of an organized government and a traditional culture. Early Spanish explorers found a mighty river, its banks lined with broad fields of corn and other crops surrounding Indian settlements. Tanning and weaving were among the most common crafts.

All of this marked them as one of the most advanced of the aborigines met by the White men within what now comprises the United States.

All the knowledge we have of the inhabitants of these regions, before the white man came, were found in geologic



investigations, reports of students of anthropology, recorded reports of early explorers, and those traditions described by the first natives with whom they came in contact. This is a story of what was here and what happened.

Dr. Eldred Harrington, Albuquerque man of letters and a geologist of note, tells us in an unpublished manuscript that:

"We should bear in mind, that the north pathway along the Rio Grande occupied several different valleys in its Geologic past. Once the river flowed at the general level of the University of New Mexico and the top of the lava flow west of the Rio Grande."

"Strangely, south of us, it went on, through what is now the Jornada del Muerto. Once it passed to the west of the Sierra del Cristo Rey and to the west of El Paso, to empty into a great inland sink, in what is now Old Mexico."

Dr. Harrington explains by a map that at this period, some twenty thousand years ago, there were two Pleistocene lakes, nearly as large as inland seas, east of the Rio Grande. One occupied the area south of Albuquerque to Socorro; the other was south of Socorro to below the present Alamogordo.

Dr. Harrington further described changes which occurred in these areas before the glacial period. The lava flow from volcanic eruptions from the volcano on the site of what is now known as the Valle Grande created the barriers now noted on the west of the present Rio Grande. The lava flow near Socorro crowded the river out of its bed, causing it to flow west, crossing the Jornada and intersecting its ancestral bed. At some unknown period, the river returned to its original course, from which it has meandered through the valley, from one side to the other, even within historic times.

Recently, across the river and to the northwest of Albuquerque, a few miles south of the College of St. Joseph of Albuquerque, there have been discovered campsites of



Folsom man, the earliest known habitations of this area. The peoples we call Folsom man must have inhabited the area after the Glacial period. So far as we know, these early people preceded by thousands of years the aborigines the Spaniards found here.

The first white men to gaze upon the primeval beauty of what we now refer to as the Middle Rio Grande Valley, were Hernando de Alvarado and his companions. This chosen captain of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado led the first exploration into these regions in the year 1540. After the assault and capture of the Zuni pueblo of Hawikuh, in the year 1540, Alvarado's commander sent him ahead in quest of the fabled cities of Cibola.

News of these cities had been given Coronado by an emissary from Cicuye. This spokesman was an Indian who, because of shaggy adornments, the Spaniards dubbed "Bigotes" (whiskers). When Alvarado passed by the Pueblo of Acoma, he was welcomed and with companions climbed to the top of the lofty Rock. Continuing, he reached the Rio del Norte very near the present pueblo of Isleta. From here, Alvarado proceeded north, up the river, to near the present town of Bernalillo. Here he made camp, awaiting the arrival of his General who had remained at Zuni, and the remainder of his army which was following up the Sonora River, led by Captain Tristan de Arellano.

It was in the fall of the year when Alvarado first reached the Rio Grande and one can well appreciate the lavishly worded report he sent Coronado of this mighty river, flowing through a wide valley. Its banks were lined with "alamos", with broad fields of corn and other crops surrounding the numerous Indian settlements. Along its elevations there was the distant background of mighty mountain ranges, now known as the Manzano and the Sandia, which at this time of the year were probably snow-capped. To those weary "conquistadores", after crossing the desert wastes of Arizona and the sand and lava strewn areas from Zuni, this verdant valley they gazed upon must have seemed a veritable paradise.

The marvelous story of the explorations of Vasquez



de Coronado, Knight of the Golden Plume, will not be related here. It is pertinent only to note that while his records list and name practically every Indian pueblo of New Mexico from Zuni to Taos, they are silent as to what pueblos existed south of Isleta, which pueblos are not even mentioned. Coronado did report that he had been informed of the Province of "Tutunuaco", where there were other pueblos. This reference was evidently to the Piro pueblos which began with Sevilleta, near the present La Joya and extended south to the former San Marcial and included the Piro pueblos in the now called Manzano Mountains.

All these pueblos of the Piro nation disappeared from history long ago. At the site of the former San Marcial, just below the black mesa, there were two pueblos, one on either side of the river. Next up the river was "Qualacu", near the present Socorro. Between Socorro and the present town of Sabinal were two pueblos, the first called by Spaniards who came after Coronado, "Nueva Sevilla", the other "San Juan Bautista". These pueblos were visited en route by Onate's men as is recorded in the "Itinerario" of his journey. It is known for certain there were other pueblos which apparently were by-passed and which are later mentioned in his reports, as Teyepan, near the present San Antonio, and Senecu, which occupied the exact location of the present town of San Antonio, both south of the present Socorro.

The mention of these pueblos does not preclude the existence of numerous other settlements along the river. F. W. Hodges, historian, lists some four hundred and seventy Indian settlements as compiled from the Onate records. Over the period of forty years between Coronado's exploration and that of Onate, it is probable that many of these Piro settlements between San Marcial and Isleta which existed at the time of Coronado's "Entrada", had been abandoned and destroyed by the marauding Apaches. No record is found as to any pueblos existing between Sabinal and the Belen area. This does not preclude the probability that there may have been scattered communities in



this vicinity. In fact, Indian ruins are found most anywhere in this area.

When Coronado came to New Mexico in the year 1540, he following an itinerary up the Sonora River to the Arizona border, near the present town of Clifton, then northeasterly across the little Colorado and the Gila rivers to Hawikuh, one of the Zuni pueblos, then westerly to the Rio Grande. This accounts for his failure to report in detail on the pueblos of the Rio Abajo. Chamuscado and Espejo, who came some forty years after Coronado, followed the same itinerary but apparently travelled the Rio Abajo south. Both reported on pueblos, apparently those of the Piros, near the present Socorro and the former San Marcial, which was abandoned after the disastrous 1929 flood of the Rio Grande, which the early Spaniards called the "del Norte" and the "Rio Bravo."

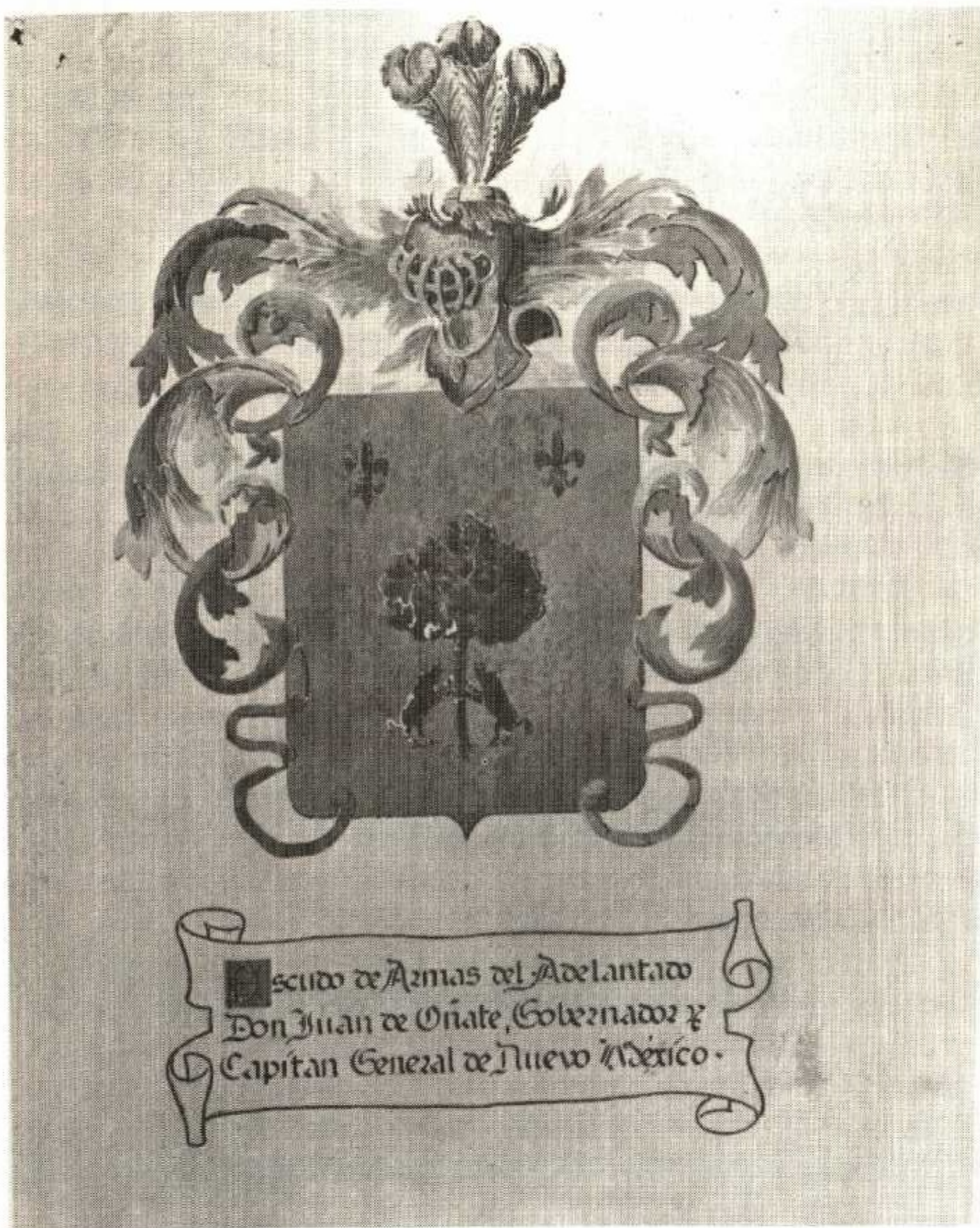
On the western fringe of the valley area of the Rio Abajo is the Indian pueblo of Acoma, first visited by Alvarado. These people, of Keresan linguistic stock, traditionally trace their origin to the cliff dwellers of the Rito de Los Frijoles. Nearby is the pueblo of Laguna, non-existent when Alvarado passed that way. It was established after the De Vargas reconquest, in the year 1699, by refugees from other pueblos of various linguistic stock and mixed origin. Since these peoples are continuously identified with the history of the Rio Abajo, they are mentioned here.

Isleta was the first of the Tigua pueblos on the Rio Grande and was in existence when the Spaniards first came. Strangely, Coronado makes no mention of it. It was called Ysleta by explorers who followed him, meaning "small island" since it was between dividing branches of the river. Its Indian name was "Shiewhibak" which means a knife laid on the ground to pray, "Whib."

This, briefly, is a picture of the Rio Abajo as it was when first visited by the white man.

In 1598 came the Conqueror, Don Juan de Onate, who colonized and established the Kingdom of New Mexico, as it was first known. From here, recorded history starts.





Coat of Arms of Don Juan de Onate, first Governor of New Mexico, 1598-1608.



## CHAPTER II

### FIRST COLONIAL PERIOD

It was during the First Colonial Period (1598-1680) that Missions were first established in the Rio Abajo including Isleta in 1629 and in the Piro villages of the Manzano Mountains, Tajique, Quarai, Gran Quivira and Abo; also other Piro pueblos south along the river as far as Socorro East of the Rio Grande in the Manzano range at least five pueblos had existed from time immemorial, long before the European had set foot on this continent.

Recorded history in New Mexico began on September 8, 1598. Don Juan de Onate had taken possession of New Mexico in the name of his sovereign, Felipe III of Spain, on April 20, 1598, on the banks of the Rio del Norte, in the vicinity of the present El Paso, Texas.

Onate proceeded up the Rio del Norte to establish his headquarters at the Indian pueblo of San Juan. This became his capital, San Gabriel, the first in the "Kingdom of New Mexico."

The first years of the 17th century marked the farthest advance north of Spain's Empire in the "New World." The First Colonial Period lasted 82 years, to 1680, the date of the Pueblo Uprising and expulsion of the Spanish from New Mexico.

During the brief incumbency of Onate as governor, little is recorded which has any relation to occupancy or settlements of the regions of the Rio Abajo. There is mention made of a trip by Onate to the pueblos of San Juan and Sevilleta in what is now Socorro County. His men visited the Piro Pueblos in the Manzano Mountains and made war with Acoma, conquering and burning the pueblo. No missions were established or settlement attempted until some years after his administration.

The first years of the Colony's existence were not too



happy. To begin with, the location was not suitable; the winters severe and the planting seasons short. Onate proved a poor administrator. There was continual friction between the Civil authorities and the Priests, resulting from efforts of the Franciscans to convert and better the lot of the Indian converts and their alleged exploitation by the Military. Unfortunately, this continued throughout the entire First Colonial Period, and many feel was directly responsible for the Pueblo Uprising of 1680.

Onate, it appears, instead of trying to establish his Colony upon a firm economic basis, with his Captains, devoted their time and exhausted their resources in explorations and the search for mines, the while depending upon the friendly Pueblos to support the colonists. These soon grew tired of their permanent guests and voiced their resentment.

So bad were conditions that in the year 1605, while Governor Onate was on a trip of discovery to the South Sea, the colonists at San Gabriel, almost all, deserted and returned to New Spain. The Spanish authorities determined otherwise and the colonists were forced to return. Afterward, Onate was removed from office and a new governor, Don Pedro de Peralta, replaced him. Peralta was charged with the duty of rehabilitating the Province and not to permit a single person to leave the Colony. Santa Fe was founded at some date from 1608-1610, the exact date is not known, although archivists have been searching for this evidence for fifty years or more.

During the 82 years or more that Spain ruled New Mexico, and up to the Pueblo Uprising, Santa Fe was the only Royal Villa. There was a settlement at Santa Cruz de la Canada, near the present Espanola; another at Taos and one at Bernalillo. It was during this period that Franciscan friars established those imposing mission churches among the Tigua and Piro Pueblos east of the Rio Grande and in the Manzano Mountains. Quarai, the Mission of the Immaculate Conception, was at a Tigua Pueblo eight miles northwest of the present Mountainair. San Miguel de Tajique, a smaller pueblo twenty miles north of Mountainair, was



also of the Tigua nation. Nuestra Senora de la Navidad de Chilili, thirty miles north of Mountainair, also belonged to the Tigua nation. San Gregorio de Abo, twelve miles west of Mountainair, was a Piro pueblo and southeast of Abo was Tabira or Gran Quivira, a Piro pueblo. All of these were abandoned prior to the 1680 Pueblo Rebellion due to the continual raids by the Apaches.

In 1626 along the river area, there was established the mission of Nuestra Senora del Socorro near the present city of this name, with a church and monastery. The Piro Indians, previously driven from Sevilleta by the Apaches, were at this time resettled at the same location, and a church, San Luis Obispo, was built. Some twelve miles north was the mission of Alamillo, and a few miles north, the mission of San Pascual, near the present San Antonio de Senecu. These five pueblos had existed from time immemorial. Today the visitor views the imposing ruins at Quarai. Its builder and first "Custodio" was Fray Francisco de Acevedo. Other Franciscans who served included Fray Geronimo de Lara, who was there until his death in 1629. He was buried there. A century later, under the administration of Governor Francisco Antonio Marin del Valle (1754-1760), the remains of this saintly Franciscan were removed to Santa Fe where they were buried in one of the churches. Just where his ashes lie is unknown.

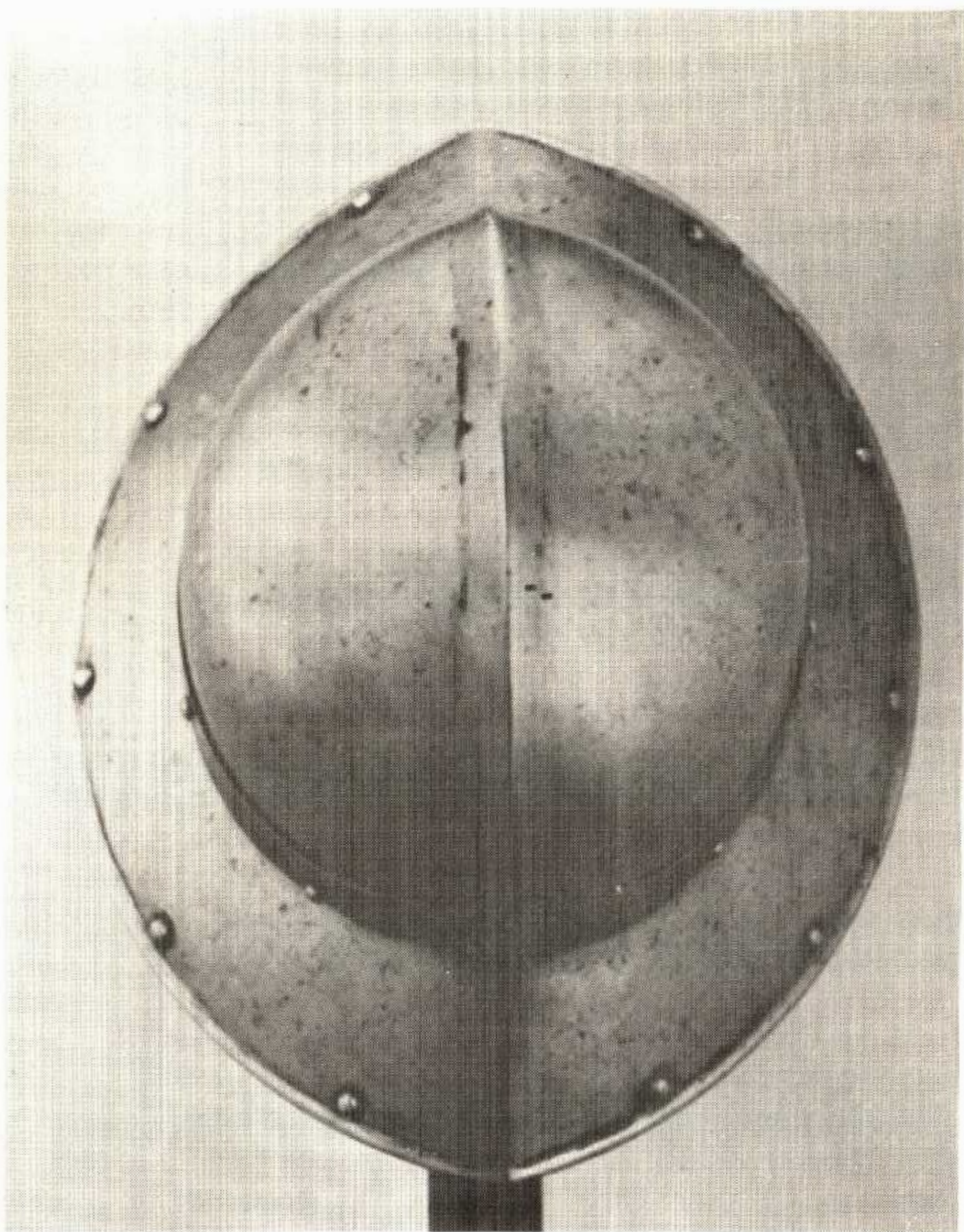
Twelve miles north of Quarai was established San Miguel de Tajique in 1629, and the mission at the ancient pueblo of Chilili in the same year.

This was the mission of Nuestra Senora de la Navidad. Its first Custodio was Fray Alonso Peinado who died and was buried there.

Abo pueblo, like Tajique, was visited by the Spaniards very shortly after 1600. It was a populous pueblo of mixed Piros and Tiguas. Fray Francisco de Acevedo, who may be likened to and called the Fray Junipero Serra of New Mexico, founded the mission of San Gregorio de Abo in the year 1629.

All of the above missions were abandoned and fell into ruin due to the merciless raids of the Plains Indians,





Typical Spanish helmet, 17th century, from Metropolitan  
Museum of Art.



the Apaches and the Comanches. By 1677 all of these pueblos and missions had been abandoned.

Returning to the Rio Grande Valley (The Rio Abajo). Isleta was founded as a mission (San Antonio de Isleta), in the year 1609. After the abandonment and destruction of these pueblos, and from about 1675 and up to the date of the rebellion, many of the fugitives from these lost pueblos joined the Isletans.

Missions established by the Piro villages before the rebellion were San Luis Obispo, at Sevilleta, north of Socorro, which was settled about 1626; Nuestra Senora del Socorro at the Piro pueblo of that name, about the same year; and the Mission of San Pascual and of San Antonio de Senecu. These were abandoned about 1675. Most of the inhabitants of Senecu were exterminated by the Apache raiders, including the priest in charge, Alonzo Gil de Avila.

The authors acknowledge assistance in compiling the above information from Harle R. Forrest, *Missions and Pueblos of the Old Southwest*, Reprint Rio Grande Press, 1961.

During this First Colonial Period, it is a fact difficult to understand today, that the Spanish Franciscans, while creating churches, monasteries and convents, whose beauty and architectural grandeur arouses the admiration of the visitor even today when he views them in ruins, at the same time were abjectly neglectful of their own environment. The temples where the Spaniard himself worshiped were, so contemporary writers report, mere hovels compared to the monasteries and churches and convents erected at Jemez, Abo, Tajique and Quarai.

With the establishment of every mission, there were stationed a few soldiers for protection of the Friars and generally Spaniards who in small groups drifted to and settled in these vicinities.

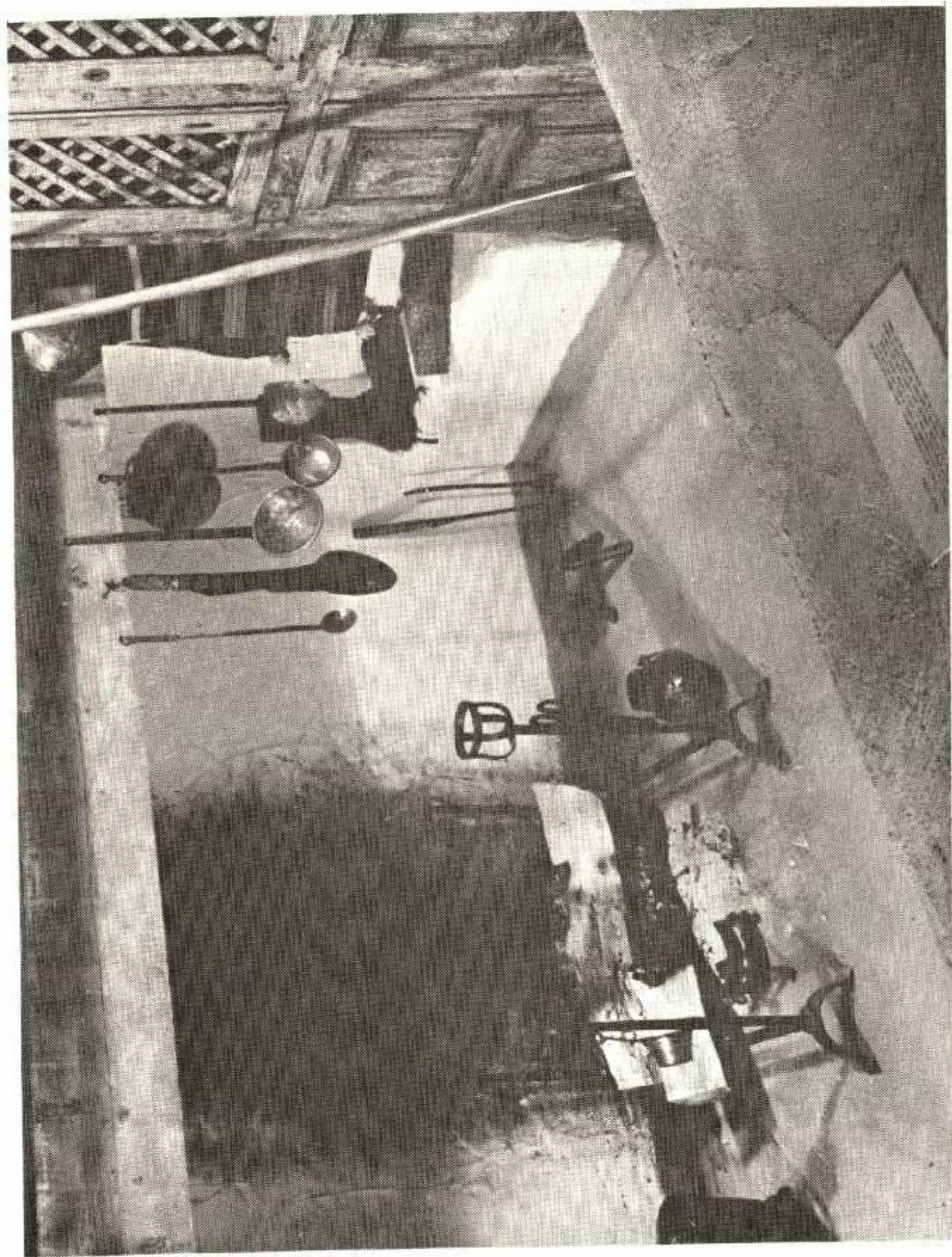
Very soon after the Conquest, settlers were attracted to the rich grazing and farming lands in the areas between Albuquerque and Belen (not yet existent) or the Rio Abajo.

Near the present Albuquerque was the Hacienda of one Carabajal, where the retreating Spaniards paused during



the retreat to Guadalupe de El Paso. Across the river was a settlement known as Atlixco (later Atrisco). Atlixco, in the Nahuatl language means "near the waters." Probably the vicinity was originally settled by the Mexican Indians who accompanied Onate from the valley of Atlixco, in Mexico. Near the present Tome was the Hacienda of Tome Domingo de Mendoza and near Belen was the Hacienda of Felipe Romero.





**Typical Spanish kitchen of the Rio Abajo, 17th century collection of the Museum of New Mexico.**



## CHAPTER III

### GOVERNMENT IN EXILE

The Pueblo Rebellion of 1680 in New Mexico is the only instance in the history of this continent when the aborigine expelled the white conqueror from his original domain.

A period of some 12 years, from 1680 to 1692, elapsed between the ending of the First Colonial Period and the beginning of the Second Colonial Period.

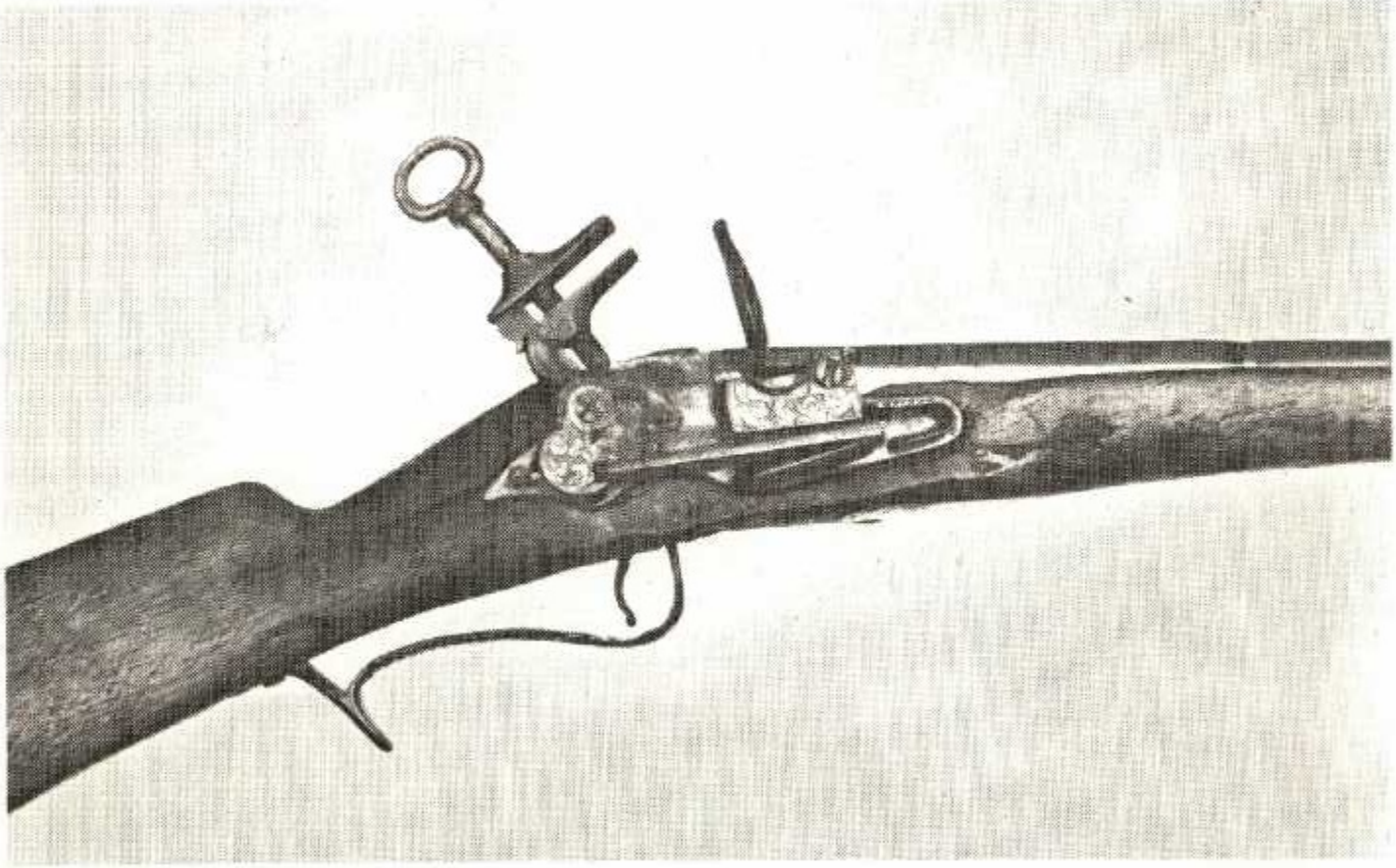
To preserve continuity of the story of the Rio Abajo, it is well to make brief reference to the events of this period, but no attempt will be made to give the history of the Revolt or its details. Its impact on the history of the regions concerned in this book is of interest.

In the 1680 Rebellion, the Piro Nations were entirely exterminated; those few pueblos which had survived along the Rio Grande valley, after the abandonment of those in the Manzano Mountains were destroyed. From Isleta south there was not a single pueblo settlement remaining.

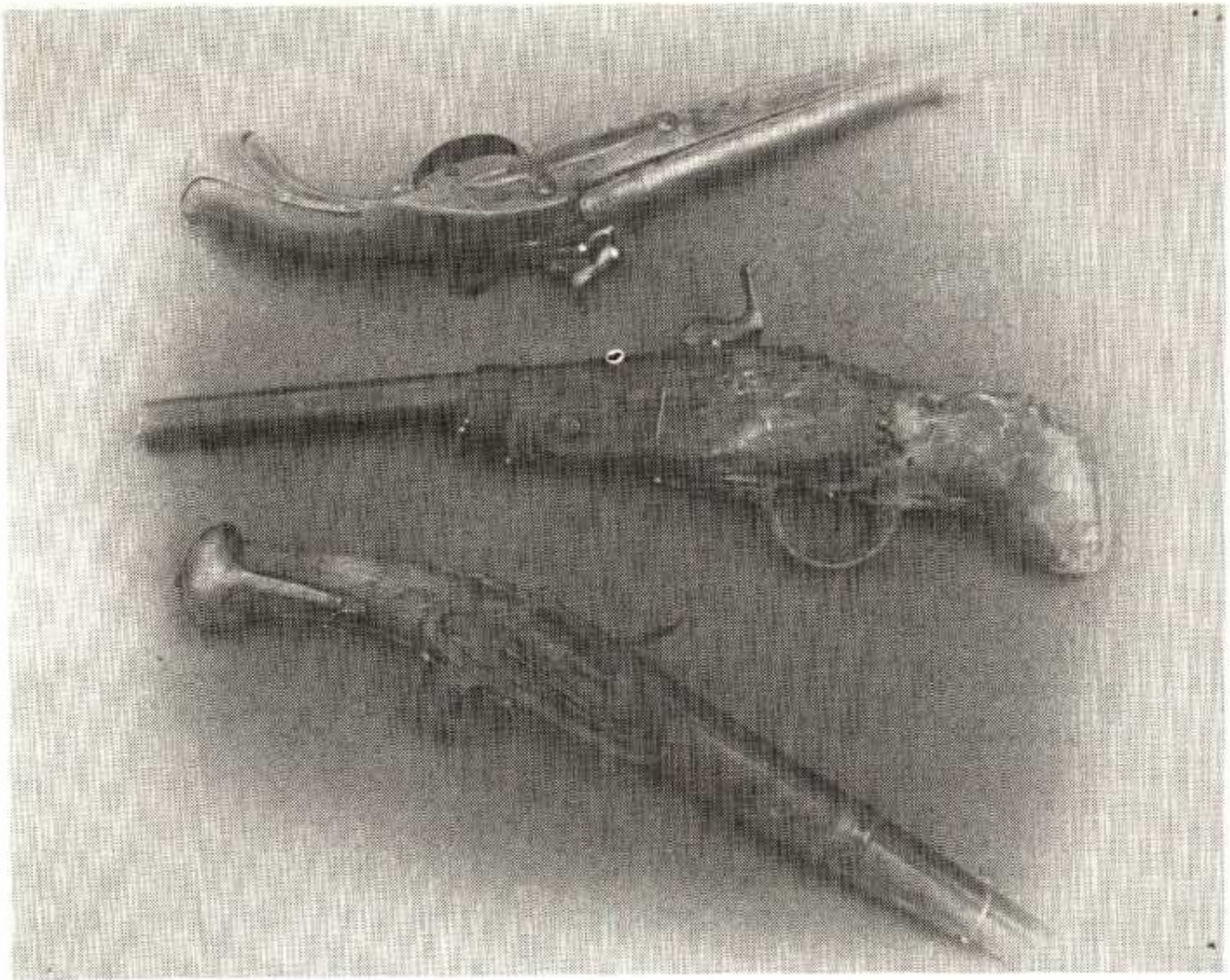
The Isletans did not join in the uprising. However, when Governor Antonio de Otermin, on his retreat from Santa Fe, reached this pueblo, he found it completely deserted. Here at Isleta, Otermin rested his retreating Colony and was joined by fugitives from "haciendas" of the Rio Abajo and continued his journey south to El Paso del Norte, or Guadalupe de El Paso, as it is sometimes called, in the vicinity of the present El Paso, Texas, where he established his Government in Exile.

The victorious Pueblo Indians followed the retreating Spaniards to about as far south as the present Socorro and were satisfied to allow them to continue their withdrawal. Governor Otermin gathered the remnants of his Colony at a camp at San Lorenzo, near Guadalupe de El Paso, where





Spanish finitlock musket, or escopeta. The gun made a very loud explosion and put Apaches to flight.



Typical Spanish revolver — flintlock and cap and ball pistols, 18th century.



he waited directions from Mexico City and attempted to reorganize his forces for a speedy return to his lost Province. Dissension among the colonists, his soldiers and even his officers, delayed this until November 5, 1681, when he started north with a force of some three hundred armed horsemen equally divided between Spaniards and Indian allies.

On the march north, although hostile Indians were sighted, no opposition was encountered as the army passed the ruined pueblos of Senecu, Alamillo and Sevilleta. At Isleta they found the pueblo occupied by some 1500 Indians, all hostile. An assault by the Spaniards followed. Accounts indicate that some 600 Indians were killed and the remainder surrendered. These pledged their allegiance, asked forgiveness for their apostasy, ascribing the same to their fear of the other rebellious pueblos.

After Isleta had apparently been justified, Otermin sent his second in command, Juan Domingo de Mendoza, ahead to the northern pueblos. Mendoza passed San Felipe, Santo Domingo and Chochiti, which he found abandoned, but intact. Near Cochiti he encountered and had parleys with strong forces of the rebels. These pledged their return to Spanish rule but apparently were insincere and were only biding for time until they were reinforced by warriors from the other pueblos, when they could attack the Spaniards. Mendoza had no specific orders from Otermin and was without sufficient troops to establish any authority, so accepting their assurance, he returned to report to the Governor by whom he was severely censured for not destroying the pueblos and the enemy.

In the meantime, trouble was brewing at Isleta. Most of the inhabitants had left the pueblo and fled to join the rebels. Otermin decided to return to Paso del Norte. He first burned the greater portion of Isleta, then took all the supplies he could and moved south. He took with him some 500 Isletans whom some writers refer to as Christianized Indians who feared the rebels. These were settled at a new pueblo, Isleta del Sur, near the present El Paso. This pueblo was given San Luis as its patron and when the original



Isleta was re-established with a mission in 1709, it was given the name "San Agustin de Isleta," which it still retains.

Otermin was succeeded in 1683 by Domingo Jironza Petriz Cruzate, who held office until 1686. Under Cruzate, another foray was made into New Mexico. No opposition was encountered until he reached the Pueblo of Cia (Zia), where a bloody battle was fought which resulted in the burning of the pueblo. More than 600 Indians were killed and many prisoners taken. This victory was very effective in crushing the opposition of the rebels and laid the way for the eventual re-conquest of the Province.

Cruzate was succeeded by Pedro Reneros de Posada who held office until 1689. Records are somewhat confused as to the succession of Governors. It appears Reneros attempted an "Entrada" which was with little success and there is nothing noted of importance during his brief rule.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE RE-CONQUEST

The re-conquest of New Mexico took place in 1693, after 13 years of a government in exile, which followed the first Spanish Colonial Period and the Indian Pueblo Uprising of 1680.

The Rio Abajo was visited twice by the new governor, Don Diego de Vargas; first on a reconnaissance expedition in 1692 and again on his "Final Entrada" in 1693.

On his first "Entrada," De Vargas traversed the entire Rio Abajo and met no opposition. His second and final expedition was equally as peaceful in the Rio Abajo, but at Santa Fe, De Vargas had to put down a bloody rebellion before accomplishing the re-conquest.

It was on Feb. 22, 1691 that Don Diego de Vargas (Zapata Lujan Ponce de Leon, his full title), scion of a most illustrious and noble family, with a distinguished record in the Spanish wars over several centuries past, was named governor. He took possession of his government with energy and enthusiasm.

Less than 18 months later, on August 10, 1692, at the town of El Paso del Norte, the Royal Alferez proclaimed the orders that the 16th day of August had been set for De Vargas' departure on a journey of re-conquest.

The Alcalde Mayor was instructed to advise Jose de Padilla, war captain of the towns of Senecu, Isleta and Socorro, to be present at 8 o'clock on said morning with his warriors, to plan his campaign of re-conquest and reorganize his command for the recovery of Spain's lost province, to which he had pledged his personal fortune.

De Vargas set forth into New Mexico with a considerable armed force, but no colonists, on a reconnaissance expedition to canvass the situation. His plan was to obtain the submission of rebellious pueblos and then to follow up



with a larger force, supplemented with those of the original colonists who were longing to return to their homeland, plus additional colonists whom he began at once to have recruited in New Spain. He hoped to thus firmly re-establish Spanish authority in the Province.

This story is first concerned with De Vargas' "First Entrada" which tells of the "Rio Abajo" as he found it.

His journey began on August 17, 1692. Sergeant Juan Ruiz de Cazares, with two wagons of supplies, a small piece of ordnance and a large bronze stone throwing mortar, and with a contingent of armed horsemen, led the advance.

On August 31, the army arrived at the former Piro village of Senecu, which they found uninhabited. On September 2, they passed the former Piro pueblos of Socorro and Alamillo, and found both destroyed.

On Thursday, September 4, the army arrived at the uninhabited pueblo of Sevilletta and paused at the abandoned farm of Felipe Romero, nearby. Here they rested because of the excellent pasturage and adequate water. They were now in the close vicinity of the present Belen. Their diary notes that they passed by the ruined hacienda of Juan Domingo de Mendoza; this was in the vicinity of present Tome. From here the General sent a detachment of soldiers ahead to ascertain whether the apostate Isletas were preparing to resist his advance. It was reported to him that the pueblo was abandoned. On September 9 the army arrived at Isleta.

The conquering army had now traversed the entire Rio Abajo and met with no opposition. They found no inhabited towns, only abandoned and destroyed pueblos and former Spanish "Haciendas" in ruins.

Among those who accompanied De Vargas on this First Entrada, and later accompanied him on his Second and permanent journey of conquest were many of the original settlers of the Rio Abajo who, at the first opportunity, returned to their former homes in the vicinity of the present Valencia, Los Lunas, Peralta, Tome and Belen.

De Vargas proceeded to Santa Fe where he arrived on September 13 and found the Villa held by the Tano Indians



and strongly fortified. The Indians first spurned all peace overtures and promises of pardon; hostilities were imminent. After many conferences, the Tanos surrendered and pledged their allegiance to Spain and were joyfully received into the fold. De Vargas then returned to El Paso del Norte, notified the Viceroy of his success, and prepared for his "Final Entrada."

On October 13, 1693, Don Diego, with a small force of soldiers and what colonists he could recruit, left El Paso del Norte to complete his work of restoring Spain's sovereignty in New Mexico.

Included were eight hundred to nine hundred souls, including 17 Friars. Among high officers who accompanied him were men who later were distinguished in the history of the Rio Abajo, of Belen, Los Chavez, Peralta, Tome and adjacent settlements.

Two of the descendants of one of these, Fernando de Chavez, are the late United States Senator, Dennis Chavez, born in Los Chavez, and State Senator Tibo J. Chavez, native of Belen. Both trace their family back to this distinguished pioneer and one of the first settlers of the Rio Abajo.

The second "Entrada" of De Vargas was unopposed by the Indian inhabitants of the lower Rio Grande, and he entered Santa Fe unopposed on December 13, 1693. But trouble was not over.

When later, an attempt was made to take over the public buildings and evacuate the Indians to their original pueblos, open rebellion broke out. On December 29, the Spaniards stormed the Royal Villa, heavily garrisoned by Tanos and their allies.

After a bloody conflict, the Indians surrendered and De Vargas raised a cross in the Plaza and took formal possession of the Royal Villa.



## CHAPTER V

### RECONSTRUCTION YEARS

The Second Colonial Period in New Mexico was a time of reconstruction when town settlement grants were created. This period began about 1692 and continued to 1821, when Mexico became an independent nation.

A review of certain aspects of Spain's rule of the Province of New Mexico from its original settlement in 1598 until the loss of the Province provides essential historical background to the development of the Rio Abajo.

When Don Juan de Onate left New Spain for New Mexico, his colonists took with them immense herds of livestock. So far as other supplies were concerned, they took with them sufficient for their maintenance until they reached the settlements. From then on, they were on their own; their support was to come from the land and as it worked out, more from forced contributions from the aborigines than from their own labors.

Two factors dominated the economy of the Spaniard in all his ventures in the New World. The "repartamiento" system and the "Encomienda" system. The practical working of these two Colonial systems is not difficult to grasp and is necessary if one is to understand the times.

Under the 'Repartamiento' system, an entire pueblo with all its population, was given in almost complete servitude to the donee of this authority. It was akin but went far beyond the Feudal system of Europe by which the serf, while bound in service to the Lord of the Manor, yet retained a semblance of personal rights and looked to his Liege Master for protection. The "Repartamiento" worked out for the benefit of the Indian when there was a considerate and kind Master. More often, it was viciously cruel as in Cuba where it resulted in the complete extermination of the native population and led to the introduction of slav-



ery. It is doubtful which of the two systems mentioned was the better or the worse.

Under the "Encomienda" a settlement of natives (in New Mexico a pueblo), was designated to the "Encomendero" (the Donee) of lands granted him in the vicinity, so he might utilize the personal service that was due the Crown. "Encomiendas" constituted a major factor in the history of Spanish America where there were Indian inhabitants. Laws could never eradicate the abuses that resulted. Personal labor was considered, along with agriculture and other produce, as part of the tax due the Crown.

While in Spain at the time of the discovery of America there existed the same feudal system as in other parts of Europe, the Repartamiento and Encomienda systems were an adaptation of the system the Aztecs in Mexico used toward the conquered people.

Under his contract with the Viceroy for the occupation of New Mexico, Don Juan de Onate was extended the privilege of granting "Encomiendas" to those who accompanied him on his journey of conquest. When the Governor began to extend this system in New Mexico, protests were submitted to the Viceroy. It was reported to him that settlers who served as soldiers were being rewarded as "first settlers" by small "encomiendas". This was a rule that the Ordinances provided by the Laws of the Indies in New Settlements, whereby the Indian could be persuaded to pay modest tribute; the Indians who submitted to obedience should pay this tribute to the Spaniard who held their "Encomienda."

The term "modest" depended upon the whim of the "Encomendero." At an investigation held in Mexico City in 1602, while Onate was Governor, it was testified that in 1601, the Governor had levied a tribute of 2,000 cotton blankets, each one and a half yards square, and 500 deer skins, upon the Indians.

During the First Colonial Period, no town settlement grants were extended. The only Royal Villa during Onate's brief administration was San Gabriel, and afterwards, the Governors who succeeded continued to use the permission



given Onate to extend Encomienda grants, with certain limitations. In practice, they were extended to persons of influence and rank. These were given lands adjoining Indian pueblos with specific rights to service and tribute from the inhabitants of these pueblos. The donees were fortunate to leave the capital, Santa Fe, and settle on and establish their own farms with sufficient retainers to do the work. It was a distinct boon to them, economically, and a distinct lift in status.

At the outbreak of the Pueblo Uprising, there were some twenty or more haciendas with their Encomiendas, in the Rio Abajo. All these were destroyed by the Indians.

The present settlement of Valencia was resettled after the Re-conquest, on the exact site of the Hacienda established by Francisco de Valencia under an Encomienda extended by Governor Pedro de Peralta in 1610. Valencia came from Santa Fe. He was in charge of the Rio Abajo settlements until his death, shortly before the uprising. His retainers no doubt were the nearby Piro Indians or possibly Tiguas from Isleta. None of his family returned after the Re-conquest. As in the case of Tome, the new settlement was named after the original 'Hacendero.'

The settlement of Tome, was the site of the hacienda of Tome Domingo de Mendoza, who was the son of Tomas Mendoza. This family was prominent during the First Colonial Period. Fray Angelico Chavez, in his splendid treatise "Origins of New Mexico Families", gives a full geneology of the 17th Century families in New Mexico. He states that the father of Tome Dominguez de Mendoza settled with his family in the Sandia jurisdiction, where the son married into the Chavez family (also prominent in the history of the Rio Abajo and of Belen); that Tomas Mendoza came to New Mexico in the early 17th Century and died in 1656 at the age of ninety-six. All his children were born in Mexico, indicating that he came to New Mexico at a very advanced age. Tome Dominguez served as Interim Governor of New Mexico in 1666. Numerous members of his family and his brothers and sisters escaped the 1680 massacre; many were killed by the Indians. Apparently none of his family re-



turned to New Mexico after the Re-conquest, excepting some of the women, according to Fray Chavez.

Immediately after the Re-conquest, Vargas set about to re-establish Spanish authority and repeople the devastated Province. Of those colonists who had fled, some remained at Guadalupe de El Paso for the ten year exile, others returned to New Spain.

The muster rolls taken upon the arrival of the colonists at Guadalupe de El Paso, and the list of those who returned, has been carefully preserved. In the latter list appear names which later appeared as settlers of the Belen area, who returned to their former homes.

Captain Juan Gonzalez Baz, one of the first settlers of Albuquerque, boasted that he had returned to the hacienda where he was born; likewise Bartolome Romero who lived in the Belen area.

The situation in New Mexico had changed much upon the return of the Spaniards. Most of the Pueblos, disillusioned by twelve years of tyrannical rule under Pope, the Indian who led the revolt, were ready to welcome the Spaniards, but some of the pueblos continued to cause trouble for many years. During the absence of the Spaniards, the Apaches and the Plains Indians had raided the pueblos almost with impunity.

In 1710 the Pueblo of Isleta, which Vargas had found deserted, was resettled by gathering those of its inhabitants who had fled to other pueblos.

As a matter of protection, the Pueblo Indians were encouraged to form larger communities. A new pueblo was established at Laguna where none had existed before the uprising. A policy was initiated of establishing towns and garrisons throughout the Province to preclude any repetition of the 1680 uprising and to protect the Province against the savage tribes, the Apaches, the Comanches and the Navajos. The "Encomienda" system was never used again.

After the establishment of Santa Fe, and Santa Cruz de la Canada, the next Royal Town was San Felipe de Albuquerque in the year 1706. It is of interest to note how these Town settlements were established.



Santa Fe, Santa Cruz and Albuquerque were not Town settlements, made under a Grant. They were established directly by the Government. They had the status of Royal Villas with the status of incorporated towns, each with an Alcalde with duties akin to those of the Mayor in our times and at the same time judicial functions. The Alcalde presided over the "Ayuntamiento" (Town Council).

There was another type of settlement within which come Belen and Tome. These were Town Settlements made by a Grant. Thirty or more families made petition either to the Alcalde of the jurisdiction or direct to the Governor, reciting their need of land for their support and for pasturing of their flocks and herds and describing lands they desired to occupy. Lands subject to such petition had to be vacant, unclaimed and of the Public Domain.

The Governor, on receiving the petition, filed with him or forwarded by the Alcalde, reviewed the same and returned it to the proper Alcalde to investigate whether there were any adverse claims to the lands petitioned.

As the next step, the Alcalde notified the adjoining owners if there were any claimants, including Indians, if these lands were in the vicinity of a pueblo.

On the assigned day, no one objecting, the Alcalde, assuming the petition had been approved subject to his finding the facts correct, proceeded to assign to each settler or family, a designated portion of the lands for his home and farm. The extent of land allotted was left to the discretion of the Alcalde, apparently thinking not of the available arable land and the number of settlers. Lands were left undistributed for future colonists, as it was not intended that the community should remain static. These lands were given the settler in fee and upon his residing there for the specified period, usually about five years; they were his, to use as he saw fit, and to occupy or sell, as he chose. The Alcalde made due report of his Act of Delivery of Possession, which was duly filed in the Archives at Santa Fe, as was the title of the settler.

In addition to the homesites given the settler, large surrounding areas, usually unarable and useful only for



gathering firewood and pasturage, were assigned to each Town. The settlers were only given the use of these lands. This permissive use gave rise to what we now know as Community Land Grants. When Congress, under the Surveyor General's Act, and under the Court of Private Land Claims, approved private claims in New Mexico, it gave a new title to these Community or Common lands; still in Community interest but in fee; not a permissive tenure as under Mexican and Spanish law.

The Alcalde, on making the distribution, led the settler over the lands, pointed out to each his boundaries and performed all the acts incident to delivery of a good title. The settler plucked grass, picked weeds, threw stones and shouted "God Save the King," all so the world might know the land was his.

There was another system of land tenure, Private Grants. These were extended on proper petition to citizens of distinction and merit, as a reward for Military or other service. There were no Common lands attached to this type of Grant. They were granted in fee to the fortunate beneficiary and constituted baronial estates.

In the Rio Abajo, one of the first Private Grants given was the San Clemente, extended by Governor Vargas to Mateo Sandoval y Manzanares, in the year 1716. This was in the vicinity of the old Pueblo of San Clemente and practically where the settlement of Los Lunas was made years later. The Grant was given by Governor Martinez in the year 1739.

There were two other Private Grants extended in this area, the Joaquin Sedillo Grant, between the south boundary of Isleta and the lands of one Antonio Gutierrez. This was given to Joaquin Gutierrez in 1739. Clemente Gutierrez died in 1758, owning the Gutierrez and Sedillo Grants, the whole being known as the Rancho San Clemente. There is much confusion about these mentioned Grants which the Pueblo of Isleta made claim for. Eventually, the descendants of the Grantees came out with ownership of the Bosque de los Pinos area. This area includes what is now Bosque Farms.



Three Town settlements of importance were made in this area. The first was the Town of Tome which was granted to Juan Varela and other families, most of whom it is said came from the Rio Arriba. This Grant was given in the year 1739 by Governor Gaspar Dominguez de Mendoza. The second, Belen, was granted to Captain Diego de Torres and some thirty-two families by the same Governor, in the year 1740. A third, the Casa Colorada Grant, was given to Jose Maria Perea and others by Governor Bartolome Baca in the year 1823. The Belen settlers came mostly from the Albuquerque area.

There were other Grants in Valencia County, the Seboyeta, consisting of three separate grants, one by Governor Fernando Chacon, in 1800, one by Governor Alberto Maynez, in 1808, and one by Governor Facundo Melgares in 1819; and in 1856 the Cubero Grant in western Valencia County. None of these were in the Rio Abajo, but some forty miles to the west of the Rio Grande.



## CHAPTER VI

### BELEN

More than 200 years ago, a military garrison was established in Belen, for the protection of the missions and scattered haciendas along the lower valley. A presidio was established, and Belen was made a walled town.

This development came just 20 years after a Royal Grant was approved establishing the Belen settlement. But the importance of Belen was as an armed protector of the Rio Abajo against Indian marauders for 150 years.

One report says: "There has been damage, disaster and desolation of ravaged towns by the enemies, the Apaches and Comanches . . ."

In 1755, Fray Isidro Murillo tells how Comanches attacked the missions of Belen, Sandia and others, and left them completely devastated — The Gilenos, one of the fiercest branches of the Apache nation, repeatedly raided isolated haciendas from Santa Fe south, including Belen and adjacent areas.

Belen was the second Town settlement in the Rio Abajo (1740) following Tome (1739). In many respects, its early history parallels that of its neighbor, to the east and north, just across the river.

These are common experiences in the early history of these twin communities. Both were settled by colonists who came from the Albuquerque jurisdiction, although it is said some of the Tome colonists originally came from the Rio Arriba. Both Grants were settled by colonists who came from the Albuquerque jurisdiction because the location there was unfavorable to their economy and livelihood. Tome had in its vicinity a group of "Genizaros" (displaced Indians) who were the cause of some friction in the early days. Belen had similar difficulties with a group of "Genizaros" who settled nearby.



Like Tome, Belen was referred to by various names, Belem, Bethel and Nuestra Senora de Belen. Also, like its neighbor, Belen was faced with continual raids from the Apache, the Comanche and the Navajo, through much of its existence. This was especially true even through early days of American rule and well into the 19th century.

Unlike Tome, Belen soon outstripped its neighbors. It soon broke away from the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Isleta and assumed jurisdiction of adjoining communities which were considered a part of Belen. Since early times and especially following American occupation and through the Civil War and to modern times, Belen has prospered to where it is today one of the leading cities of this area. It is probably the most important city in economic and industrial status between Albuquerque and Las Cruces. It is well called the "Hub City."

## EARLY DAYS

Captain Diego de Torres and Antonio de Salazar, his brother-in-law, early in the year 1740 addressed a petition to the Governor and Captain-General of New Mexico, Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, in their own behalf and in behalf of some thirty-two families, all from the Albuquerque area, asking for a grant of lands on which to establish a colony. Unlike the people of Tome, who first directed their petition to the Chief Justice (Alcalde Mayor), these future Belenites, believing in the old Spanish proverb that when one desires a boon he should ask God first, not his Saints, they directed their petition directly to the Governor.

Albuquerque was founded in 1706 by Governor Cervo y Valdez who intended it to be the principal settlement of the Rio Abajo. Soon after its founding, it began to wane in importance. It had been established as a garrison, not as a Town settlement. Kuber, in his work, tells that the settlement started with a flourish and the erecting of a church with a capacity of 252 persons was almost immediately begun. In the year 1754, 15 years after Tome was established and 14 years after Belen, the population of Albu-



querque had thinned out; its people leaving to settle towns and settle on private "haciendas" where there were more desirable lands. Atrisco, just across the river to the west, was a Town settlement; Padillas and Pajarito were private grants. Most of the settlers who left Albuquerque went to the Rio Abajo.

By the end of the 18th century, Albuquerque had lost in population to such an extent that the church had fallen into disrepair and only used on Sundays. Governor Mendinueta in 1767 required Indians from Tome and Valencia (Genizaros) to reconstruct the church. Most probably the greater part of the foundation and walls of the present San Felipe church date back to this reconstruction.

## OUT OF THE FRYING PAN — INTO THE FIRE

To better understand the situation of these settlers who, dissatisfied with their lot in Albuquerque, rushed to populate the adjoining areas, north as well as south, let us turn back a few pages of history.

During the brief period the Pueblos were in control in New Mexico, following the successful uprising in 1680, the Apaches, the Comanches and the Navajos enjoyed a veritable holiday, raiding the pueblos at will. The return of the Spaniards was no deterrent. On the contrary, it gave impetus to their savage warfare. It was a common boast among the Comanches that the only reason they did not completely destroy the Spanish was that they were needed to raise horses and sheep for them to steal.

In the year 1750, a military garrison was established at Belen for the protection of the missions and the scattered haciendas along the lower valley.

Lawrence Kinniard in "The Frontiers of New Spain" Vol. 13, Quivira Society Publications, sums up the Indian problem in New Mexico, at this period, as follows:

"For many years, hostile Indian pressure had been increasing and by the year 1763 it was critical. Across



the continent from the Gila valley to the borders of Louisiana. Apaches and other war-like tribes were driving in upon the frontier settlements, destroying ranches, running off livestock and killing settlers. Most dangerous of all the Indians in the border region of the Viceroyalty were the Apaches."

Fray Isidro Murillo, stationed in El Paso, on November 4, 1755, wrote to the Custodio of his Order in Mexico City, reporting on conditions in New Mexico. We quote from his letter:

"Since my sole purpose in this letter is to reply to your very Reverend Paternity and to explain what the Father Custos meant by his, I shall stop to relate in detail the strong expression which Vice Custos Fray Mariano Rodriguez used to convey to Father Custos the extent of the persecution of New Mexico by Apaches, Comanches and many other nations.

In his letter (the Custos) received from him during the month of September, he tells me how the Comanches attacked the mission of Sandia, Belen and others, and left them completely devastated and that in one of these encounters, he was in danger of being killed by the enemy; that he considers the Father Visitor (Dominguez) foolhardy to want to enter at a time when these regions are besieged and the enemies have assembled in such squadrons that the kingdom will doubtless suffer helpless defeat. Your Very Reverend Paternity may now see what inspired the Father Custodio to say, 'this Custodia is on the point of suffering its last agony.'"

In the year 1776, on order from the Viceroy of New Spain, the Marques de Rubi made a personal inspection and survey of Spain's frontier provinces in New Spain, including New Mexico, and in his report is found the following reference:



“On the 10th day of August, 1776, we travelled from Las Nutrias to the pueblo of La Limpia Concepcion, called Tome, and also Fuenclara; six leagues opposite the pueblo of Belen, with thirty-eight families, both Genizaros and Spaniards — all kinds of grains abound and plenty of sheep . . . ”

The actual population of these settlements at this period is difficult to fix. Records are not in accord. Florence Hawley Ellis, in the *New Mexico Historical Review* of April, 1935, quotes Father Bernal, then stationed at Belen. He states there were under his jurisdiction 36 families of Genizaros and fourteen half-breed families.

In the year 1775, at Santa Fe, Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, an officer of the Royal Garrison, and a skilled engineer, under the direction of Juan Bautista de Anza, then Governor, prepared a map of the towns and settlements of the Province, existing as well as abandoned and destroyed. He gives a graphic picture of the devastation caused before and during the three-quarters century after the Reconquest. His report covers every part of New Mexico, including the Rio Abajo. We quote:

“There has resulted damage, disaster and desolation of towns ravaged by the enemies, the Apaches and Comanches who surround the Province.”

Pacheco makes this recommendation:

“ . . . building the towns in form of a quadrangle, with at least twenty families in each, the houses in form of a fortress, the small ones with two ramparts, the larger ones with four and between embrasures for escopetas (muskets) when needed.

“It is not advisable to erect torresones” (towers) as was the ancient usage, because experience has taught us that the enemy seeks protection under these walls and tunnels under them and sets fires. The Comanches attack intrepidly and with vigor; they huddle under



the eaves and walls of the 'torreones', safe and protected, and breach the walls and set fires, and when the besieged, to impede these tactics, expose their persons, they are killed with ferocity, old and young of both sexes.

"The Pueblos and Christian Indians have their homes joined, of two and three stores, forming a Plaza, and all with portable ladders which they lift up when attacked, and the terraces and roof tops are furnished with embrasures and parapets for defense."

### MORE ABOUT DEPRADATIONS

To write a story of the near three centuries of conflict which New Mexico and its Pueblo Indian allies carried on with the savage tribes, "Gentiles" (as the Spaniards refer to them), would take several volumes and would still remain untold. We cite only recorded facts which relate to the Rio Abajo in Spanish times.

There were many branches of the Apache nation. Among these were the Gilenos, the most incessant raiders, repeatedly attacking Albuquerque, Tome, Valencia and Belen.

Sabinal was the southernmost settlement, yet it was incorporated as a part of Belen. In 1770 an attempted settlement was made at Nutrias, just south of Sabinal. It survived for a short while, but was abandoned on account of the savage "Gentiles," its people mostly joining the settlement of Casa Colorada. This was in Mexican times, in 1824. Later, the Nutrias area was sparsely settled. It exists today.

In 1763 Governor Tomas Velez Cachupin extended a Grant to a group of settlers from Albuquerque in the Canon de Carnue (Carnuel) in what is now Tijeras Canyon, some thirteen miles east of Albuquerque. In 1763 the Gileno Apaches forced the settlers to abandon the town. Years later, another Grant was given to a like group from Albuquerque. These have maintained the settlement to this day.

In the year 1776, the Comanches raided the town of



Tome, which was almost destroyed. The records of the San Felipe Church in Old Albuquerque show that the Padre from there went to Tome and gave burial to those who had been killed.

The Manzano Mountains, just east of Tome and Belen, were the haunts of the Comanches; the Apaches and Navajos were in the Sandia Mountains just to the north. The Navajos also raided the settlements, coming through the Jemez country and entering the Rio Abajo country through Corrales; they also raided from the west, through the Laguna Pueblo area.





Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe Church of Los Chavez, now a mission of the Belen church.



## CHAPTER VII

### LOS CHAVES

Don Nicolas Duran y Chaves may be said to be the founder of the community of Los Chaves. It was Nicolas Duran de Chaves who, as Alcalde of Albuquerque, resident of Atrisco at the time, made application for a land grant to Governor Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza. This request was granted in 1739. Don Nicolas was the son of Don Fernando Duran y Chaves.

According to Fray Angelico Chavez' "Origin of New Mexican Families", Don Fernando Duran y Chaves managed to escape the 1680 Indian Revolt from the Sandia District with his wife, Luisa Hurtado, and four small children.

Don Fernando was the only member of the Duran y Chaves family to return at the time of the Reconquest with Governor DeVargas in the grand Entrada into Santa Fe on December 16, 1693. He led with the royal standard as Alferez Real, but soon after moved to the family home at Bernalillo. In 1707 he moved to Atrisco.

There are ten children named in Don Fernando's will, which was dated at Atrisco, and among the children named in the last will and testament of Don Fernando was Nicolas Duran y Chaves.

In his petition for a Spanish Land Grant, filed in 1738, Nicolas Duran de Chaves told Governor and Captain General Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, that he was a descendant of the original Chaves family and a son of Don Fernando Duran y Chaves, who was a captain with Governor De Vargas during the reconquest of New Mexico in 1693.

He went on further to say that he had a large family, consisting of nine sons. The daughters were not mentioned, since they were not considered as important in those days and, in addition, that he had many other descendants. Cha-



bes told the Governor that he had sheep and cattle and no place to pasture them in the Atrisco area where he lived, except in the region of Isleta, and that this would, naturally infringe on the pasture of the Isleta Indians.

The petition also related that the lands requested were vacant and unsettled lands; that Nicolas Duran y Chabes had established a small fort in the Los Chavez area to protect his family and shepherders from the wild marauding Indians, at great danger to his life and the safety of his family.

The boundaries of the land grant were designated and described as follows: On the east by the Rio del Norte (Rio Grande), on the north by lands of Captain Bernabe Baca and the ruins of the home of Tome Dominguez, the west by the Rio Puerco and on the south by Los Esteros de San Pablo. An estero was a swamp or slough.

Nicolas Duran y Chaves was awarded the land grant known as Los Chaves Land Grant on the west side of the Rio Grande, and just opposite the Tome Land Grant. It was bordered by the Baca holdings and a site called "Los Esteros de San Pablo" to the south, in the area of what is later called Sausal. The north boundary was even with the old home of Tome Dominguez. The mission church at Los Chaves became christened as Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe and was attached to the Belen mother church.

The 1790 census lists Los Chaves under six different plazas, which again were constructed in the Spanish style of rectangular forts for protection from the enemy Indians. There were 78 households in the six plazas. Most of the population is listed as Spanish, except for a few Coyotes (children taken from wild Indian tribes), and Mestizos. Each plaza had a Comandante who was in charge of the plaza.

The Comandante in Plaza No. 1 was Miguel Gabaldon, livestock raiser, Spanish, married to Maria Gertrudis Chaves, Spanish.

Plaza No. 2 Comandante was Juan Francisco Chaves, Spanish, stock raiser, married to Magdalena Varela. They



had several children and one servant coyota, 26 years of age.

Plaza No. 3 Comandante was Jose Antonio Chaves, Spanish, farmer, married to Monica Varela.

Plaza No. 4 Comandante was Juan Cristobal Sanchez, Spanish, livestock raiser, married to Maria Antonia Chaves, Spanish, several children, one servant Indian, male, 14 years of age. Another servant mestiza, 25 years of age, with daughter, one year of age.

Plaza No. 5 Comandante was Francisco Baca, Spanish, married to Maria Victoria Silva, Spanish, two sons and four daughters are listed.

Plaza No. 6 Comandante was Jose Francisco Pino, Spanish, livestock raiser, 39 years of age, married to Juana Maria Baca, Spanish, 25 years of age. Several children are listed, and also an Indian Apache servant, 6 years of age. Most of the population is listed as farmers, livestock raisers, and a few weavers. Andres Romero, Spanish, is listed as the sole teacher in the area. This is of particular significance, since no teachers are listed by profession in any of the other communities in the Rio Abajo in this census.

The 1839 militia list of New Mexico lists 19 soldiers bearing arms for Los Chaves — three mounted on horseback, sixteen on foot, or infantrymen, one mounted on horse with escopeta, or flint-lock gun, and eighteen were armed with bows and arrows. Mariano Gabaldon is the only one listed mounted on horse with gun.

There are many descendants of the Gabaldon family living in Los Chaves today, and as a matter of fact, at one time there was a plaza known as the "Plaza de los Gabaldones," where the Gabaldon family lived. Patrocinio Gabaldon, the grandfather of Justo Gabaldon of Belen, brought the first sheaf-binder machine to Los Chaves. This was the beginning of modernizing the farm in the late 1880's.

Patrocinio Gabaldon appears to be the grandchild, according to family history, of the soldier Mariano Gabaldon. There is also a Carlos Sanchez listed as a member of the militia, whose descendants are also living in the same area today. In addition, there were several surnames by the name



of Baca, Chavez and one with the surname Mireles.

Fernando Duran y Chaves of Los Chaves, who was apparently named after his grandfather, inherited management of the Nicolas Duran y Chaves Land Grant for the family upon his father's death.

In 1767, or some 28 years after the Los Chaves Land Grant was made to his father, Fernando made claim to the Belen Land Grant immediately south of the Los Chaves Grant. Apparently Fernando felt that the grass looked greener on the other side of the land grant.

At any rate, he purchased the interest of one Pedro Yturrietta in the Belen Land Grant for the sum of \$200.00 and began to move his flock of sheep to the Belen Land Grant.

Toribio Garcia, Baltazar Baca and other members of the Belen Land Grant immediately protested the encroachment and trespass of Fernando, stating that they needed the Belen Land Grant to pasture their livestock and as lambing grounds during the lambing season.

An appeal was made directly to Governor Pedro Fermín de Mendinueta of the Order of Santiago at Santa Fe to restrain Fernando in his action of trespass. The appeal was made through Don Juan Cristobal Sanchez, Alcalde Mayor of Albuquerque, whose jurisdiction included the Los Chaves and Belen areas. Governor Mendinueta reviewed the matter and one year later ordered that the residents of the Belen Land Grant return to Fernando the \$200.00 that he invested in the land grant, and that Fernando remove himself from the Belen Land Grant and back into his own territory of the Nicolas Duran de Chaves Land Grant, where he was limited to the use of this area in pasturing his livestock.

The Governor also ordered that, in the future, no land sales were to be made or interest purchased in the land grant without prior notice to the owners of interest in the land grant involved. This would prevent further misunderstandings and trouble among the members of the adjoining land grants.

The Los Chaves area continued to grow with the main industry agriculture in the valley and livestock grazing



grounds in the western area. Also similar to the development of other communities in the area, water-wheel grinding mills were soon constructed in the general area, where grains were plentiful, primarily corn and wheat.

Corn and wheat were the staff of life in those days, in addition to meat, and were used in many forms. "Atole" and "Chaquewe", Indian preparations of corn in the form of a thick mush, or a malt diluted with milk, honey or syrup or anything that was available, was used very widely in every Spanish household. Corn and wheat were ground at the local mill and used as a bread, biscuits, corn bread, or tortillas.

Louis Huning of Los Lunas, grandfather of Jack Huning, established one of the largest grinding mills in the valley in the northwest part of Los Chaves.

Mr. Huning dug a private ditch for water power, taking the water from the Rio Grande near Los Lunas, and carrying it some five miles by private ditch to the foothills of Los Chaves. Then he turned the water downhill toward the valley, giving the mill an excellent drop and ample power for the wheels to grind the grain.

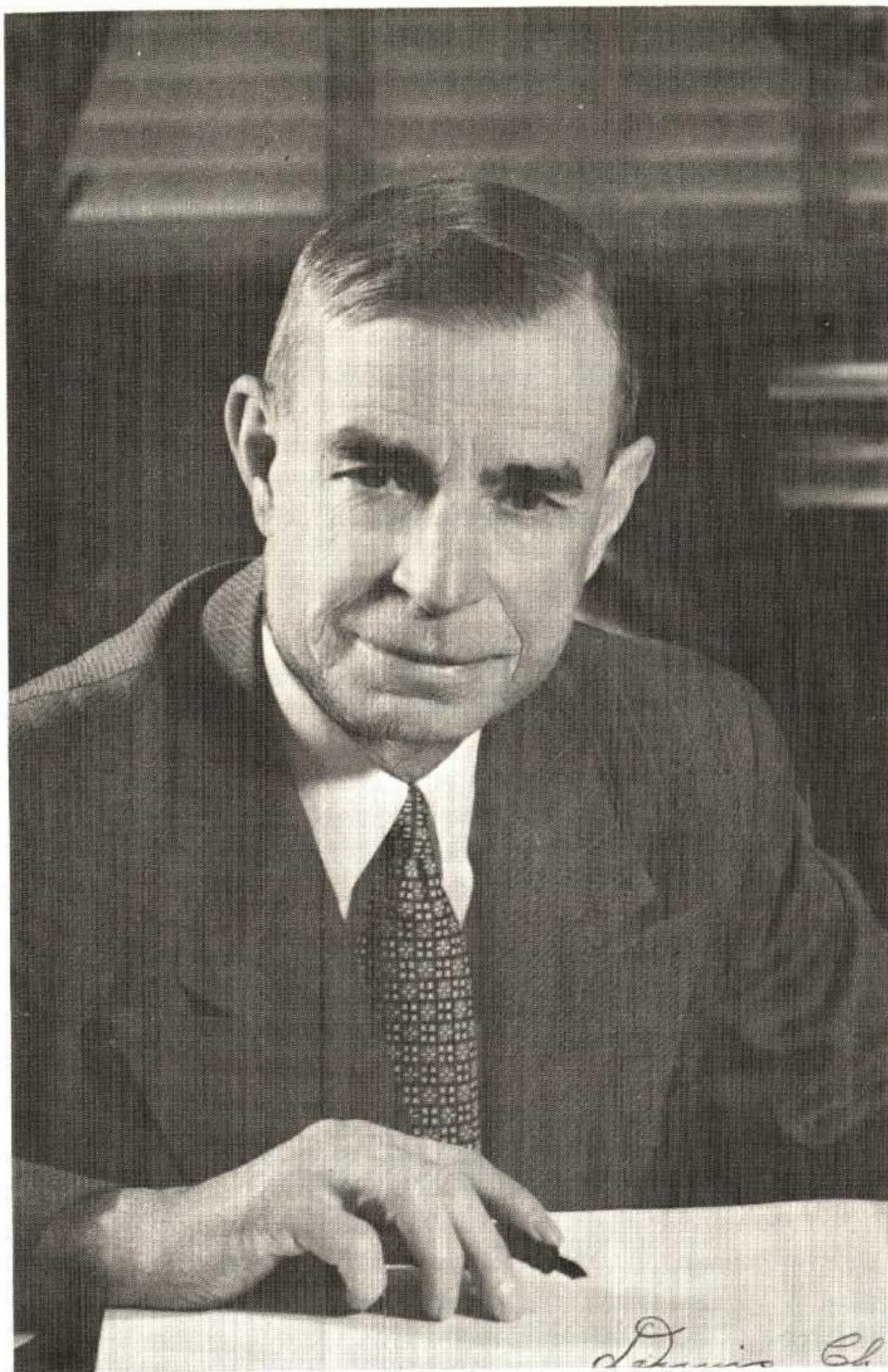
Mariano Chavez had a molino or mill closer to the river. His son, Juan Jose Chavez, later fought in the Civil War in the battle of Valverde, and received a government pension for injuries received in the line of duty, until his death at the ripe age of 100 years.

Juan Jose Chavez was the grandfather of late Blas Chavez of Los Chaves, the great-grandfather of Sosteno, former county treasurer.

The family of the late Frank B. Chavez, father of Tiburcio Chavez of Los Chaves, are direct descendants of the Nicolas Duran de Chaves family, as well as many of the Chavezes living in this area at the present time.

One of the most distinguished descendants of the Fernando Duran Chaves family was the late Senator Dennis Chavez of Los Chaves. Dennis Chavez always boasted during his political career that he was from Los Chaves. Most of his major campaigns for office he preferred to organize and originate in Los Chaves, possibly because of sentiment





U. S. Senator Dennis Chavez



to his community of Los Chaves and family ties there. Senator Chavez' father was David Chavez, and his mother was Paz Sanchez.

David's father was Jose Maria Chavez, who was married to Isidora Armijo, of the prominent Armijo family. Jose was in turn the son of Julian Chavez, and Julian's great-grandfather was Pedro Duran y Chavez, a brother of Nicolas Duran y Chavez, founder of Los Chaves. Senator Chavez's grandmother on his maternal side was Barbara Chavez, who was also related to the Armijo family.

The local community always respected Barbara as one of the most outstanding women of her time. She could match her wit and ability with anyone. Barbara had a fierce desire to learn and, lacking a formal education or an available teacher, taught herself to read not only Spanish, but English, which was quite a feat.

It is said by the old-timers, passed by word of mouth over the years, that she would read the newspaper out loud to the family and neighbors, thus entertaining and informing themselves on the outside world at the same time.

The story is told of Barbara that a servant in their home, by the name of Bartolo, refused to carry out orders and became outright impertinent. The menfolks were away on an Indian campaign, and since Bartolo was a large, strapping fellow, it was not easy to discipline him physically.

So a plan was then devised by Barbara. She bet the servant, Bartolo, that he could not get his big body into a certain wool sack and completely cover his head and feet; if he could do this, he would win a bet.

The unsuspecting knave got in the sack, exactly as Barbara had planned, and when he was good and tightly fit into the sack, Barbara took a large stick and proceeded to beat up on the helpless fellow in the bag, until he promised to amend his ways and obey his mistress.

Patents were issued by the United States of America in recognition of the original land grant title. These patents were in reality a confirmation of the Spanish land grant titles which the United States recognized and approved



over the years, after proper investigation was made as to the validity of the original title.

The patent by the United States government to the Nicolas Duran de Chaves heirs was issued by President Teddy Roosevelt on the 8th day of February, 1907. However, by that time, the land had been reduced in acreage.

Apparently the heirs had disposed of some of the land over the years and there were only 39,837 acres remaining. This was according to a survey filed and approved by the Court of Private Land Claims on May 29, 1895.

Pursuant to a meeting held by the land commissioners on the 5th day of July, 1885, for the specific purpose of perfecting the claim to the land grant, the following were appointed to represent the land grant: Manuel Sanchez, Jose Prudencio Sanchez, Frank X. Vigil, Patrocinio Gabaldon and Agapito Garcia.

An attorney by the name of Thornton was hired to represent the land grant before the court. At that time, 124 heads of family or rightful owners of the land grant were recognized. It was also noted in the petition appointing the representatives of the land grant that approximately one-half of this number were unable to sign their name and signed an "x" in lieu of signature. This gives pretty keen insight into the sad state of education conditions in the county in this era.

A few years later the land grant was purchased by Eduardo Otero of Los Lunas. Many of the heirs of the land grant were never fully advised as to all the intricate and unsavory proceedings, possibly for practical reasons. Apparently no adequate or proper accounting was given to the rightful owners regarding this transaction. They did not know the amount received for the land or the disposition of this sum of money.

Many of the descendants of the Los Chaves Land Grant to this date contest the validity of the sale, but this is more or less a matter of history by now. Thus came to a sad end another one of the historic land grants of New Mexico.

The late Sen. Dennis Chavez did not take undue pride in the high positions held by grand-sires, great-uncles, un-



cles and other family members. He did pride himself, however, in the fact that he was the son of poor parents, that he worked his way up by his own efforts and that he put himself through law school at Georgetown University by serving as a Senate secretary.

Senator Chavez served two terms in the House before bidding for a seat in the Senate in 1934. He lost by 1,300 votes to Sen. Bronson F. Cutting. A year later, Cutting was killed in an airliner crash and Chavez was appointed to fill the vacancy. He subsequently was re-elected five times.

As a senator, Chavez for the most part followed the new deal program of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He fought for a permanent fair employment practices act, sought legislation for development of Western resources and was active in the affairs of Puerto Rico, which he wanted admitted to the Union as the 49th state. Relations with Latin America also held a considerable part of Chavez's attention while he was in Washington.

One of the quieter members of Congress, seldom raising his voice in argument, Chavez, with his inevitable cigar, nevertheless was a picturesque figure and a powerful liberal force.

At the time of his death in 1964, Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnson said of him:

"Dennis Chavez was an able advocate of the rights of the people. His heart was always with the lowly and those who needed help . . . He will be sorely missed."

The unveiling in Washington of a statue of the late Senator Chavez of New Mexico, recalls cultural and commercial exchange between Missouri and New Mexico of nearly a century and a half in which the name of Chavez has always figured prominently.

The statue is awarded to the state's most distinguished native son for exceptional service to the state and to the nation. It will be on display in the Rotunda of the Capitol until assigned a permanent place in Statuary Hall.

In electing Senator Chavez to the Hall of Fame, the Historical Society of New Mexico has honored a descendant of pioneer Spanish colonists. He served as congressman



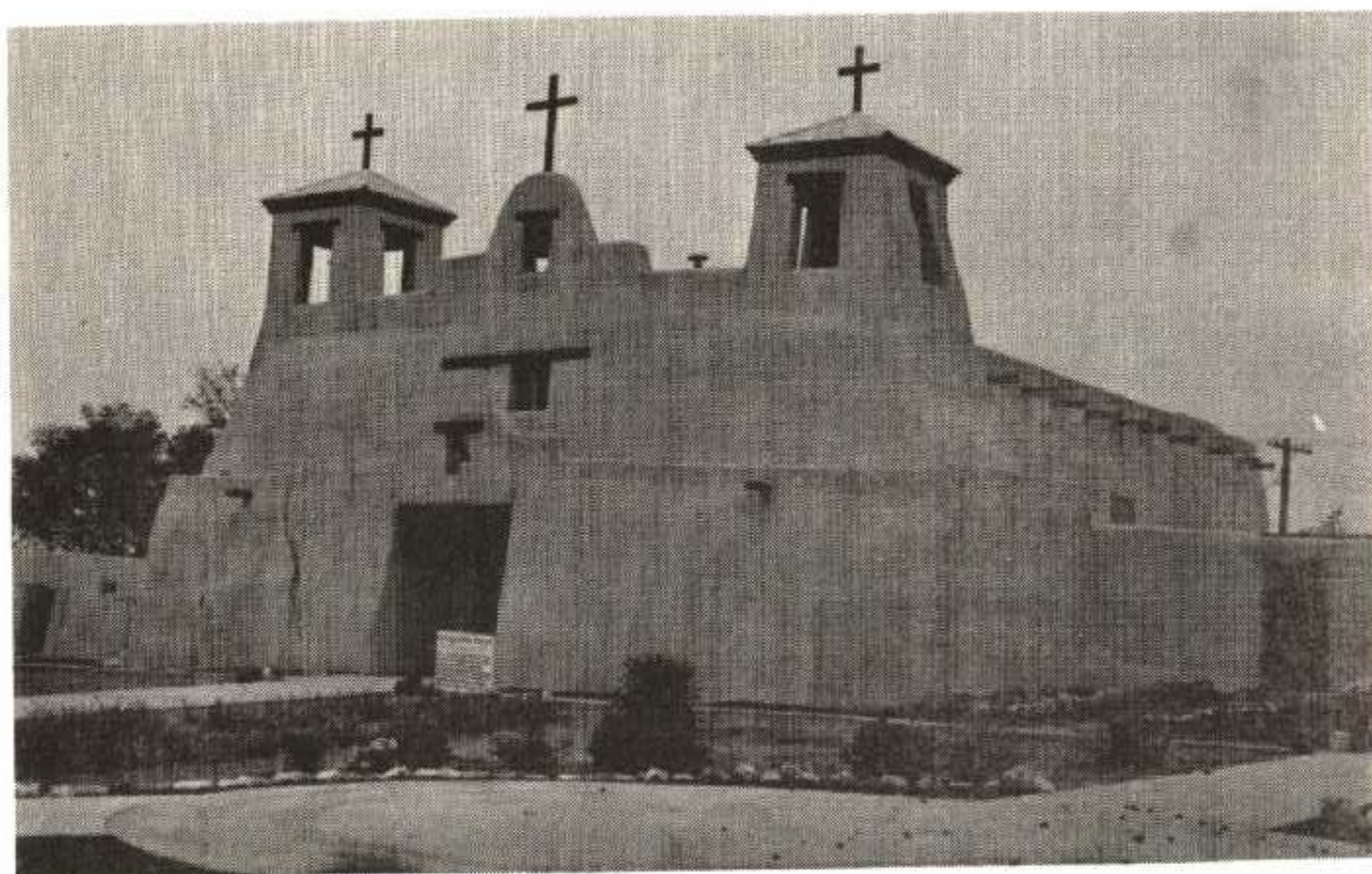
from 1930 to 1935, and as United States Senator from 1936 until his death in 1964. He was noted for his fight to outlaw racial discrimination in employment, to improve relations with Latin America, and to establish a strong national defense.

John Nance Garner once told him: "Good congressmen are just errand boys for the people who elected them." Chavez undoubtedly fitted this definition.





San Clemente, the patron saint of the Los Lunas Church, was the name given the local land grant; before the town was founded by the descendants of Domingo Luna.



Mission of San Agustin of Isleta was originally founded in 1613. The mission church was burned in the rebellion of 1680 and re-built after the reconquest in the early 18th century.



## CHAPTER VIII

### LOS LUNAS

Although the original San Clemente Grant was granted by the King of Spain to the Sandoval-Manzanares family, soon thereafter the Luna family made claim to the grant and took possession of it. Domingo's son, Enrique, continued to possess the family home and started a small livestock industry, but it was more of a private hacienda of the Luna family.

The Los Lunas mission was known as San Clemente and was attached to the mother church at Isleta.

The Town of Los Lentes, immediately north of Los Lunas, on the west side of the river, is older than the Town of Los Lunas as a community settlement and is listed in the 1790 census of New Mexico under Spanish rule.

The Plaza of San Antonio de Los Lentes had twenty-two households. The Comandante was Blas Lente, Indian, stock raiser, 49 years of age, married to Maria Lucero, Indian, 38 years of age. They had an Indian girl servant, 14 years of age, in their home.

There were few Espanoles and Mestizos living in the Indian community of Los Lentes. Most of the men listed their occupation as livestock raising, farming, and a few were weavers.

The son of Enrique Luna, Antonio Jose Luna, was born in 1808 in the family hacienda. He soon attained civic and political importance and may be said to be the father of the community of Los Lunas. He began to establish a larger settlement and attracted many new settlers who worked for him in his expanding sheep industry. Antonio Jose married Isabella Baca, daughter of Juan Cruz Baca, of the prominent Baca family from Belen. He was engaged principally in sheep and cattle raising and later began to get political control of the area.





Louis Huning - Early pioneer, rancher and merchant. The Huning Brothers, Louis, Charles and Franz, operated extensive ranching properties in New Mexico and Arizona.



There was little cash money among the early pioneers, although enough food was produced to feed the local population. The general population was, relatively speaking, poor, and had little worldly possessions outside their adobe home, farm and a few livestock to supply their local needs. Anyone who had much more was a *rico* by comparison.

Tobacco was raised for local use and known as "punché Mejicano." Although the area was not too favorable for cotton, enough cotton was raised to provide for the local needs in making cloth. Many of the old folks still remember that a local shoe was made, which were the only ones available, from the deer hide or cowhide, known as "eschizo." Iron was brought in on muleback from Chihuahua, where there was a plentiful supply. Herbs were used as home medicines, and a special cane known as "cania aigra," or yellow cane, was used as a good remedy for stomach disorders or sore teeth, and had a very bitter taste. The "Melacate" was used in spinning thread. All cloth rugs and serapes were made in what was known as the "torno", which was a homemade weaving machine. The person who operated the torno was called a "tornalero" and the wool carders were called "caraderos." Many are listed in the many communities dedicated to this trade.

Antonio Jose Luna and Antonio Jose Otero of Valencia decided on a very bold venture for those early days, in selling their sheep in the California market. It is estimated that they would receive some \$10 or \$15 per head in California, instead of the local market value of 50 cents. Moving sheep to California was no small feat, in view of the great distances involved, the challenges of the desert and the ever-present savage Indians who would attack the overland drives to California. It is estimated that in one drive the Luna and Otero families transported overland to California better than 50,000 sheep in the 1850's.

The ready cash this provided to these families soon made them the big *ricos* and the political leaders of the Rio Abajo, and particularly in Valencia County.

They were Republicans in political faith, and when Salomon Luna, son of Antonio Jose Luna, married Adel-





Salomon Luna, brother of Tranquilino Luna. Salomon was a rancher, businessman and also one of the early bankers in Albuquerque.



aida Otero, granddaughter of Antonio Jose Otero of Valencia, and Salomon's sister, Eloisa, married Manuel B. Otero, brother of Adelaida, the Luna and Otero families became welded and united into one of the most powerful and influential families of the times. They were to control and dominate the economic and political future of Valencia County for practically a century.

Antonio Luna educated his son Salomon in accordance with the standard of the ricos. He sent his son Salomon Luna back east for an education, enrolling him in St. Louis University. Salomon finished his studies and returned to engage in the stock raising business with his father. He entered politics in 1885, and was elected county clerk in 1885 and in 1887 was elected sheriff of Valencia County. Salomon Luna became the political boss of Valencia County and one of the war horses of the Republican Party in New Mexico.

Tranquilino Luna, brother of Salomon Luna, was elected as a delegate to Congress from the Territory of New Mexico in 1880. A newspaper account published in that year, soon after the election of Tranquilino, gives an excellent insight into the luxury and style of living in the Luna home:

"Up the river from Belen and railroad ten miles is Los Lunas, the home of our Delegate, elect, his father and two brothers, Solomon and Jesus Ma. Luna. These brothers, as also their sister, Mrs. Manuel B. Otero, are graduates of eastern colleges.

"Mr. Luna, Senior, has just completed a magnificent residence which is being appointed with all modern luxuries and conveniences. Each of his three sons has a large residence and gardens and lives in superior style. Mrs. Tranquilino Luna nee Senorita Romero, is particularly conspicuous for her many accomplishments, cultures and intelligence, as well as beauty of figure and features. She will honor her husband and his constituency as the wife of the young congressman who has carried his county by a plurality never before given any M. C. in our country. Only vote was polled





Capt. Maximiliano Luna, son of Tranquilino Luna. His father was a delegate to Congress in Territorial Days. Maximiliano was one of the Rough Riders under Teddy Roosevelt in the Spanish-American War. His bust is placed in the House of Representatives in Santa Fe.



against him in his precinct, and the man who did that left the place before votes were counted. There were wealthy and influential workers against him, but the people have unalterable faith in the honesty and abilities of their candidate elect as also in the family. They have a straight record in business and social life."

Tranquilino Luna died as a young man — he was only 43 — but his son, Maximiliano Luna, followed in his fathers' footsteps and also served as sheriff of Valencia County. Later, Maximiliano served with Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders in the invasion of Cuba during the Spanish-American War.

Salomon exercised such paternal and dictatorial powers that the oldtimers say the only appeal from Juez de Paz, or Justice of the Peace court, was to the conscience of Salomon Luna. Many stories still circulate, by way of old folks' tales, that Salomon had as one of his favorite sayings, "Educar un muchacho es perder un buen pastor." In all fairness to Salomon Luna, this is possibly more of a humorous political story told by his political enemies, of which he had many.

As a result of the influence of the Luna family, the county seat was soon moved from Tome to Los Lunas in 1876, where it was to remain to present times.

Prominent in the political scene in Valencia County, is the name of Col. J. Francisco Chavez, the son of Governor (1844) Mariano Chavez and grandson of Governor (1822) Francisco Xavier Chavez. Col. Chavez was educated in eastern schools, principally in the State of New York, and returned to New Mexico to enter politics and engage in the livestock industry, which was the accepted occupation of the ricos.

J. Francisco Chavez was one of the officers in the Battle of Val Verde during the Civil War and was promoted to the rank of Colonel by President Lincoln, in view of his merit as a soldier. Col. Chavez represented Valencia County in the Legislature and was elected fourteen terms, although not in consecutive order. In 1865, Col. Chavez was elected



as a delegate to Congress. He once held the post of District Attorney of the Second Judicial District.

When the Constitutional Convention met to write the New Mexico Constitution, in preparation for the admission of New Mexico to statehood, it is said that Salomon Luna, Holm Bursom of Socorro, Springer and Spiess, the "Black Eagle" of San Miguel, were the powers behind the scenes and real wheelhorses of the Convention.

It was observed that a smile, a wink or a frown from Luna would, in most instances, mean the difference between the inclusion or omission of a provision in the new draft of the Constitution. Luna was careful to protect the civil and political rights of the native or Spanish people in very clear and concise terms, and also further endeavored to protect these rights by making it almost impossible to amend some of these provisions adopted into the Constitution.

The overwhelming  $2/3$  or  $3/4$  vote required to adopt the Constitution by the populace was an anticipation by Luna, which proved to be correct, that the outsiders would in a few years control New Mexico and might put these rights of the native people in jeopardy. The strict amendment provisions were not fully appreciated until in recent times when modern amendments have been submitted to the people, particularly on the question of absentee voting.

Upon the death of Salomon Luna, his nephew, Eduardo Otero, son of Manuel B. Otero who was killed in the shoot-out at Estancia, took over the Luna livestock industry. Ed, as he was affectionately known, was aggressive, enterprising, and a good businessman, and soon expanded the Luna sheep industry into operations covering Valencia, Socorro and Catron counties. He soon became one of the more progressive and leading businessmen in New Mexico, and it is said that at one time, in the early 1900's, he was the largest single sheep operator in the United States.

Together with the family wealth, Otero inherited the title of political "jefe" of Valencia County. The old politicians say that a preliminary meeting was held in Ed Otero's parlor in Los Lunas before the county convention for the selection of the candidates for the various county offices.



Ed Otero personally hand-picked the candidates through clever maneuvers behind the scenes. When the matter was presented to the Republican convention assembled at the courthouse, it was merely a rubber-stamp performance.

Ed Otero and the Republican party continued to rule Valencia County until the 1930's when FDR and his New Deal made a clean sweep of the nation, including Valencia County, into the Democratic ranks for the first time. Thus ended the dynasty of the powerful Luna-Otero families in Valencia County.





Sangre de Cristo Church founded at Valencia where the early 17th century hacienda of Captain Francisco Valencia was situated.



Peralta Church, Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe; the community of Peralta was established early in the 19th century.



## CHAPTER IX

### VALENCIA AND PERALTA

Even during the 1680 Indian Rebellion under Pope, the Valencia area was known as the Rancho de Capitan Francisco de Valencia, named for a lieutenant-general for the Rio Abajo. At the time of the Indian Revolt, when there was a general exodus of the Spanish population down the Rio Grande from Santa Fe, as the forces of Governor Antonio Otermin were going south down the Rio Grande, mention is made of Valencia.

“Otermin and his army marched south from the Pueblo of Sandia. The Church was set on fire by the Indians.

“When His Excellency found himself deprived of other Spaniards, and his soldiers perishing for lack of food and horses, and having no one who could help him, having marched twenty days with the Lieutenant from the Rio Abajo, it was decided to give notice to those ahead — this was done from the Ranch of San Francisco de Valencia, and they overtook all the people about six leagues away, at the ranch known as San Francisco de Valencia.” \*

In the early census of 1790, Valencia is listed as two separate plazas built according to the Spanish style as forts for protection against the enemy Indians. The Comandante of Plaza No. 1 was Ignacio Vallejos, Spanish, farmer, 59 years of age, married to Maria de Luna, Spanish, 42 years of age. They had several children and a servant designated “coyote.” There were fifteen families in Plaza No. 1, most all Spanish.

\*Spanish Archives, Hackett Report, Vol. 11, page 19, which covers the retreat of Governor Don Antonio Otermin.



The Comandante of Plaza No. 2 of Valencia was Vicente Chavez, farmer, 40 years of age, married to Juana Aragon, also Spanish. They had five sons and one daughter. In this household, also, there was a "coyota" female servant, 20 years of age. There were ten households listed in Plaza No. 2. Practically all were Spanish, except for a few Mestizos or "Coyotes." All listed their occupation as farmers, livestock raisers, or weavers.

The name of the early Spanish mission is listed as Sangre de Cristo (Blood of Christ). Most of the names in Plaza No. 2 were Aragon, and it was referred to sometimes as Aragon Town, a prominent family whose descendants still live in the general area today.

Peralta is first listed in the militia list of the Rio Abajo for 1839 and is called Placeres, and later Peralta. Peralta and Valencia had one of the finest and best equipped militia in the early days. Of the twenty soldiers of the militia, eighteen were mounted and two on foot. Eighteen had flintlock type guns (escopetas). Only two were listed with bow and arrow. This is unusual because there were only a few escopetas at the time in the Rio Abajo.

The name of the Peralta mission was Our Lady of Guadalupe. Both Peralta and Valencia missions were attached to the Tome mother church. An early traveler arriving about dusk in the evening relates in his diary that he arrived at "La hora de la oracion," and he also makes note that he saw "la estrella de la oracion" in the sky. It was customary in those day to say the rosary about dusk, and upon seeing the evening star, one of the first bright stars in the west, they were reminded to say their evening prayers, which were said individually or in groups, in every home in the valley.

There were three small Spanish land grants in this area — The Bosque de los Pinos, now the Bosque Farms area, claimed by the Otero family, the Ojo de la Cabra, known as Goat Springs, which was claimed by Manuel A. Otero under a family grant, and the Lo de Padilla Grant, which was located just south and east of the Isleta lands. Some of the descendants of the Lo de Padilla grant still pos-



sess a few of the remaining tracts which remain unsold and divided among the surviving members of the family. Manuel B. Toledo, former superintendent of schools in Los Lunas, is a direct descendant of the families that settled this royal grant, which was later confirmed by the United States Government under a patent.

The story of Valencia and Peralta is the same story of trials and tribulations as the other communities in the valley — the fight for survival against the Comanche and Apache tribes, and trying to raise a crop between Indian fights and the ever-present struggle for survival.

A tale is related by an old-timer, a Mr. Sanchez who is a descendant of the Sanchez family. He tells the story that his grandfather, Jose Sanchez, was stolen by the Apaches on an Indian raid at the settlement of Valencia. The boy, who was about ten years old at the time he was carried away by the Indians, lived with the Indian tribe as a captive for several years. Then one evening, as the Indians were celebrating a certain victory and had become drunk by the liquor they had consumed, and their dancing, he stole away into the night, picking one of the fastest horses of the tribe. He headed west toward Valencia and rode all night, but his horse gave out and he noted that the Indians were in hot pursuit after him by early morning. He abandoned the horse and hid in a cedar clump, where the Indians looked for several hours and finally gave up. After that, Jose continued to walk west until he found the Rio Grande, and eventually wound up back in Valencia. His mother, in thanks to the Lord for the miracle that her son had returned, crawled on her knees from Valencia to the Tome Church to thank Our Lady of Concepcion for the miracle that her child had returned.

Carrying away children in raids was a common practice in those days; both the Indians and Spaniards would carry away children, depending on who was doing the raiding. The Spanish children would be sold as captives or ransomed by the Indians at the Indian fairs, whereas the Indian captives of the Spanish would generally be raised in the home as servants. Many years later, undoubtedly, these



children intermarried into the local families.

The Valencia area began to progress and develop. In the middle 1840's, the Otero brothers, Juan Jose, Antonio and Manuel Otero, were prominent merchants and stock raisers in the Valencia area. These families are not mentioned in the original families of Valencia. Soon the Oteros became the leading businessmen and politicians in the community, and began to take control and direct its destiny. The intermarriage of the Luna and the Otero families brought mutual advantages and further prestige to both families. Antonio Jose Otero moved to Peralta, where he maintained his business headquarters. The Oteros and Lunas soon became the wealthiest and most influential families in the state.

In early Territorial days, the first county seat was located at Valencia, where it remained until 1852, when it was moved to Tome; then Belen became the county seat, and eventually the Lunas moved the county seat permanently to Los Lunas.

Soon after the American Army of Occupation entered New Mexico under General Kearney, Antonio Jose Otero won the confidence of General Kearney, and became one of his close friends. General Kearney appointed Otero to the Supreme Court, or "Superior Court" as it was called. The other members of the court were Joab Houghton and Charles Beaubian. Otero later had the distinction of serving as the first Judge of the Second Judicial District.

Later, as the years went by, the Civil War came to New Mexico. Governor Connelly, New Mexico's Civil War Governor, moved into an hacienda at Peralta, in the Bosque-Farms area. Governor Connelly married the widow of Governor Mariano Chavez, Dolores Perea de Chavez. Col. J. Francisco Chavez lived at Peralta, near his stepfather and mother a great many years of his life when he resided in Valencia County. Old letters have been found in the possession of relatives and descendants of Col. Chavez in the Peralta area. These he wrote from Santa Fe when he was serving in the Legislature, and also from Washington, when



he served in Congress, relating to personal, social and business matters.

Some of the descendants of Governor Connelly still live in the Peralta area, and Henry Connelly, who is connected with the Los Lunas school system, is a great-grandson of Governor Connelly.



## CHAPTER X

### THE GENIZARO

The statement is often made that Belen began as a "genizaro" settlement, but historical records indicate this is not correct. More likely, the Genizaros were incorporated into the Belen community as shown by the 1790 Census, having moved in at the express invitation of the people of Belen. This was established in the lawsuit between two Genizaros and the Belen Land Grant. The two filed a petition in 1746 with the Viceroy, claiming the entire Land Grant.

The Belen Genizaro settlement was located in the southeast part of the present city, just where the railroad roundhouse was. It had a two-story adobe fort-style building erected for defense of the settlement. This was originally built in 1767. Jose Maria Baca of El Rincon, father of Bernard Baca, well known Belenite, recalled that as a boy he played in the vicinity and remembers that the remaining walls of the fortress were still standing. Today the walls have disappeared, but the ruins can still be traced.

It is a known fact that in the vicinity of the Isleta pueblo, about this same time, there was a corolary to the Genizaro. There was a small group of Spaniards settled there, seeking protection from the Indians. And of most interest is that with the Spaniards, as listed in the 1790 Census, was one Trujillo, (evidently his adopted name) described as a native of China!

Here is a description of the Belen Genizaro settlement as given in the 1790 Census:

"The Plaza of Nuestra Senora de Los Dolores de los Genizaros, as it was known in 1790, listed as the 3rd Plaza of Belen, indicated 35 families of Indians who had been converted to Christianity 'en pie' (meaning as adults)."



The Comandante of the Genizaros in 1790 was Marcos Velasquez, listed a "Mestizo" and by trade a shoemaker.

What is a Genizaro?

During the 18th Century, the New Mexican was faced with the problem of what to do with the numerous Indians and occasional Whites recovered by capture, exchange or purchase from the savage tribes. An occasional white child came into their hands, perhaps left from a tragic massacre of a family. They were usually taken into a Spanish family and raised as their own. New Mexico Pueblo Indians were returned to their native homes. A few of the recovered Indians, those who were most acceptable and desirable, were taken into Spanish families as servants. These were always referred to as "Indios", as will be noted in the Census Report shown.

The problem was with those who did not come within the above categories. There were the non-Pueblo, mostly Plains Indians, with a scattering of Apaches, Utes and Navajos. What to do with these peoples? They insisted on the right to settle in their own communities, urging their prowess in war and a common enmity they bore with their rescuers toward the "Gentiles" (the savage tribes).

The problem was wisely settled. Those displaced Indians, and this is the only proper term to designate them, were located in communities on the frontiers, where they could re-establish their homes and serve as outpost protection for the settlements. A cosmopolitan group with no tribal cohesion, there was little fear they would ever prove a menace to the Spaniards. Then again, there was the duty the Spaniards recognized to civilize them and convert them to Christianity.

The "Genizaro", as these were referred to, in two respects was a definite factor in New Mexico history, often overlooked. First, his presence at frontier outposts was a very contributing aid in defense against the savages who surrounded the homeland. Secondly, not living in pueblos or reservations, or preserving any tribal identity, which indeed they had none, and living in the vicinity of Spanish settlements, Abiquiu, Santa Fe, Valencia, Tome and Belen,



with time they merged with the Spanish population so that today, the identity is entirely lost.

The 1790 Census referred to, carefully lists as separate the Spanish, Indians, Mestizos and Genizaros. By Mexican times, the distinction had about disappeared, and in the 1839 Census of Belen, which will be referred to hereinafter, the only classifications made is "citizens."

In subsequent census reports, the term Indian is used only with reference to the inhabitants of the Pueblos and the nomadic tribes. Socially, the terms 'Indio' and 'Genizaro' have continued to the present day, and the New Mexican who was proud of his pure Castilian culture, actual or believed, often referred contemptuously to those he held in less social status as 'indios' or 'genizaros.'

A very misunderstood term, it is believed the reader will be interested in delving into the origin of the term "Genizaro."

In New Mexico, this term had an application not used in any part of the Spanish world, for in no part of the New World, not even in Mexico, was the term so used or were displaced Indians used in settlements as in New Mexico.

The term Genizaro (Jenizaro) is defined by the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy with two meanings. First, as a "soldado de infanteria de la antigua guardia del Emperador de los Turcos." (A foot soldier of the royal guard of the Turkish Emperors). The second, 'El hijo de padres de diversas naciones.' (The offspring of persons of diverse nationalities). The latter more fits the meaning of the term as used in New Mexico.

The first definition included those mercenary soldiers of the Turkish rulers, German, Scandinavians and other Europeans, and who comprised a formidable body of fighting men. Some of these were soldiers of fortune, others were Christians captured by the Turks and who were given their choice of being soldiers or slaves.

In New Mexico, the Spaniards found themselves with these displaced Indians on their hands and had no alternative except to make them slaves, for which purpose most of them were unsuitable; or placing them in settlement



where they could be self-supporting and at the same time serve as protection to the frontiers.

Abiquiu and Belen are the principal ones of these Genizaro settlements. In some ways there is an analogy between the Genizaros and the Turkish Janizaries, which no doubt led to the application of the name. But the difference is tremendous. In the case of the Janizaries, the Turks obtained a foreign legion of desirable shock troops. In the case of Genizaros, by necessity, there was foisted upon the Spaniards the allocation of groups of heterogenous Indians of military value only because they were forced to fight and defend their homes.

It was never the policy of the Spanish Government to furnish the Indians, Genizaros or otherwise, with firearms. In truth, the Spaniards themselves were not all so provided. The Belen Census of 1839, shown in Appendix, shows that many of those listed reported with bow and arrow.

The "Diccionario de Mexicanismos" (Francisco J. Santa Maria), gives the same first definition as does the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy. The second is somewhat modified. We read, "Hijo de barceno y zambuzio — dicese el descendiente de cambugo y china, o de china y zambuja." (It is said the son of a barceno and a zambuzio or of a cambujo and a chinese — in other words, mixtures of Indian and non-Spanish races.)

We would define a Genizaro very simply as a displaced Indian who came into the hands of the Spaniards either by being recovered from the savage tribes where he had been held in captivity, or by being ransomed from them, or one who has fled to the Spaniards for protection, and who, having no pueblo to be returned to, or not claimed by his captor as a servant (slave), was allocated to a designated established settlement. He was expected to provide for his own needs and defend against the enemy, just as any other settler.

There was not the slightest difference between the rescued captive taken into a private home and there raised, and of the recovered captive settled in a Genizaro town, except the name, and the choice was not with the Indian as to



where he would go. It was that of his captor. Those not allocated to Genizaro settlements were always referred to as "Indios".

A very sharp social distinction was for a long time maintained between the Spaniard and the Genizaro. In the 1790 Census, thirty-nine years after the Spanish settlers accepted the Genizaros of Nuestra Senora de Los Dolores, demarcation of Belen, as neighbors, there are shown only two marriages between a Spaniard and a Genizaro. There are quite a few marriages shown of these with Mestizos.

Intermarriage in succeeding years ended the distinction. Even Indian servants (semi slaves) often married into the families they served, and no doubt the masters had offspring from their Indian servants even as did the Southern slave-owners. Indian slavery was officially abolished in New Mexico by Act of Congress of January 1, 1853.

Early writers refer to the Genizaros and often confuse their actual status. Fray Miguel de Menchero on May 10, 1740, gave a statement in Mexico which is quoted at length as it is of extreme interest. It is taken from "Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya," collected by F. A. Bandelier. (Charles Hackett 1937).

"Tome, or Valencia — called by V. Genizaros, made up of ill-treated neophytes, is mentioned by M. as a settlement of 40 Indian families who were captives of the Apaches and Comanches, sold to the Spanish and released from servitude by the Governor in '40 to form this visita of Isleta, being 2 L. s. of that mission."



## CHAPTER XI

### BELEN LAND GRANT

The Belen Land Grant did not prove much of a bargain for anyone who owned a share in it for 196 years. Captain Diego de Torres and the other original 32 settlers who applied for and received the royal grant in 1740, spent most of their lives fighting Indians and literally digging a living out of the soil. Yet in 1936, the land grant heirs decided the remaining 100,000 acres was not worth the taxes they owed — their land grant holdings were sold by the State of New Mexico at a delinquent tax sale for 35 cents an acre.

The history of this land grant parallels the history of the Town of Belen, which in the 1960's had become a modern small American city with a promising future.

The new tiny colony on the Rio Grande had to fight for its life on many occasions against the fierce Apache and Comanche Indians over a period of 150 years. The settlement was only six years old when two Genizaro Indians challenged the legality of the Belen Land Grant.

The story of the land grant began officially on the 15th day of November, 1740, when a Royal Grant was made to Captain Diego de Torres, his brother-in-law, Antonio Salazar, and 31 other original Spanish settlers.

A petition for the grant was directed to the Governor and Captain General, Don Domingo Gaspar de Mendoza. All the original petitioners were directly from the Albuquerque area, but there is some historical reason to believe that they were originally from the Rio Arriba.

The petition said in part:

“ . . . we have large families and have no convenient lands wherein to support them — We have examined an uncultivated and vacant tract of land at the



point of the Rio Abajo and being unappropriated, we register the same and petition for a grant, in the name of his Majesty (Whom God may preserve) for the purpose of settling thereupon, there being suitable lands for cultivation, and such as are not, will answer for pasture grounds for our herds.

“ . . . the boundaries are: on the east by the Sandia mountains (now the Manzano mountains) and on the west by the Rio Puerco river; the boundary is the lands of the north, on both sides of the river, the boundary of Nicolas Chavez, and those of the adjoining settlers of Our Lady of Concepcion, the Tract of Tome, and on the south, the place called Phelipe Romero, (believed near Sabinal) . . . ”

The east boundary was given as the Sandia Mountain. Today this range is called the Manzano. The entire range south as far as Socorro was in this day referred to as the Sandia range, perhaps discounting the long accepted myth that the Sandias opposite Albuquerque were so called because their coloration resembled a slice of watermelon.

On November 15, 1740, Captain General Mendoza, exercising his prerogative, executed the Royal Grant. Quoting briefly from this instrument:

“ . . . having seen the present petition, made by the persons therein referred to — in order that a grant be made to them of the tract they ask for, in the name of the King, our Sovereign, (Whom God may preserve), the petition is granted that they may settle, cultivate and improve the same for the benefit of themselves, their children, heirs and successors.”

The Alcalde Mayor, Nicolas Duran de Chavez, of the Albuquerque jurisdiction, was directed to give possession to the settlers under the usual conditions and requirements applicable and directed by Royal ordinances.

On January 25, 1741, the Alcalde Chavez made full compliance with the order. The original documents con-



tained this additional order:

"It appearing that certain of the settlers had repented of their venture subsequently in the year 1742, the Governor issued another order providing that all those who did not resume and continue their obligations to settle the Grant within 30 days would be deemed to have forfeited their lands."

One curious and unexplained fact appears in the record. It was usual that the original papers in every Town Grant case be forwarded to the office of the Governor and there remain in the archives. When on January 12, 1857, the matter of confirmation of the Belen grant was brought before the office of the Surveyor General, one J. Bazan, justice of the peace, produced the original Grant papers and by his Affidavit certified the same had been found in the records of his office. How it was left there, or when, he did not know.

A list of the original settlers of the Belen Grant will be found in the Appendix to this work.

The general wording of the Grant left the door open for other settlers to come in and settle the Grant in addition to the original grantees. It is obvious that the original grantees considered or treated the Grant as a community land grant, and undoubtedly welcomed other Spanish settlers to come in and assist them with additional manpower to develop the Colony and to protect it against the fierce Apaches and Comanches. Ditches had to be dug to take the water from the Rio Grande. These were dug "Con palas de palo" (wooden shovels), a tremendous task indeed.

On the grant, there was plenty of land for everyone to farm, cultivate and possess. Anyone of the later settlers who needed a plot of land was either allocated a tract or he proceeded to appropriate a reasonable amount of land for his family's needs, which was generally an area approximating six acres of valley land near the river.

The terrain on the west side of the river was lower for practical irrigation, with rich river bottom soil, and was



soon settled into plazas known as Belen, Jarales, etc. Local groups of residents, generally members of families, or close friends, would build around a plaza, not to be confused with a town.

A plaza was a cluster of homes or buildings constructed around a central formal plaza. Exits from the plaza were limited, and could be closed off easily in time of danger or an Indian attack.

The farming area were immediately adjoining these small plazas. The mesa to the west, as far as the Rio Puerco, and to the east, as far as the Manzanos, were used as common grazing grounds by all the community in grazing their sheep, cattle and horses. These grazing areas were more exposed to the Indian raids, and often the Apaches would suddenly descend upon a flock of sheep or a herd of cattle, killing the "pastores" or vaqueros on guard and driving off the livestock of the Spaniards.

The Land Grant was operated very informally and loosely. The main unit was a plaza, which was duly organized, with a local Comandante and a militia to insure its survival.

The original founders of the land grant, and the newcomers, enjoyed the land in common. If any resident felt that he wanted a formal deed to a certain plot of land, he applied to the Alcalde, and later to the Juez de Paz (Justice of the Peace), for a deed.

If it could be established that the land desired in the application was not previously allotted or claimed, the appellant would be issued a deed for approximately six acres, and the only charge was a small fee for the issuance of the deed.

The only residents who could not qualify for allocation of land were Genizaro Indians who lived in their own Genizaro town, where they were allocated limited acreage for their needs.

Community land grants were established by act of the Legislature in 1907. Some land grants were organized under special legislation, and others by general acts of the Legislature. These Acts recognized the Spanish Land



Grants, as well as the Mexican Land Grants, as legal entities and quasi corporations.

The land grants were provided with legal machinery for self-government, the manner for conducting the elections, board of commissioners of the land grant, and the selection of officers to carry out the policies or instructions of the Board in the common management of their lands.

Accordingly, on February 25, 1910, the first formal organization of the Belen Land Grant was established. According to the minutes of the first meeting, the first Board of Directors elected by the owners in interest were:

Adolfo Didier, Belen  
Gregorio Abeytas, Abeytas  
Ambrosio Ulibarri, Las Nutrias  
Jesus M. Chavez, Las Nutrias  
Victoriano Sanchez, San Juan  
Nicolas S. Sanchez, Belen  
Jose Jaramillo y Chavez, Belen

This seven-man Board, known as "Cuerpo de Comisarios", selected Adolfo Didier as president and Gregorio Abeytas as secretary, to serve as officials of the grant. Venceslado Baca, father of Martin Baca, long-time Belen postmaster (1940-1965), was Vigilador, or officer in charge of all livestock on the grant.

A fee of ten cents per head per year was placed on all cattle, horses, mules and burros bearing a brand, or head of sheep. This fee was adopted by the Board also at its first meeting. A further resolution was adopted that all owners of interest of the land grant could acquire six acres of land upon payment of \$5.00 for the issuance of the deed by the President and Secretary of the Board. Board members were paid \$2.00 for each day in attendance of their official duties.

At this time there were 177 members or heads of households listed in the Town of Belen; 189 in Jarales, 79 in Bosque, 92 in Sabinal, 124 in San Juan, 44 in Las Nutrias, and 38 in Casa Colorada. Among the owners in interest were John Becker, Fred Scholle, Rev. J. A. Picard, Adolfo Didier, Saturnino Gilbert, Enrique Sachs, and other families that had moved to Belen in the late 80's.



The management of the grant continued much in the manner and form as established in 1910, until the year 1936, when the grant lands consisted of approximately 100,000 remaining acres, (some of the other acreage had been sold or allocated to the owners in common) which were sold to the State of New Mexico on a delinquent tax sale on the land grant, amounting to approximately \$36,000 or in the neighborhood of 35 cents per acre.

The Land Grant heirs were unable to raise the money to pay off the tax delinquency; the majority of the members were indifferent; after six or seven generations, they felt that they had no interest or economic benefit to them personally. Most of the lands from the Rio Puerco to the Manzanos were generally classified as pasture lands.

It was a short-sighted view, of course, for twenty-five years later the lands purchased by General Campbell at the delinquent tax sale for approximately 35 cents an acre were selling from \$495.00 to \$995.00 per half acre. These lands comprise much of the lands both east and west of Belen that are being developed today by the Rio Grande Estates.

Thus came to an end the Belen Land Grant as a formal and legal entity in a sad and ironic historical finis.



## CHAPTER XII

### LAND GRANT LEGALITY CHALLENGED

The Belen Land Grant was only six years old when its legality was challenged by the Genizaro Indians.

This Royal Grant in the Kingdom of New Mexico, as before stated, had been approved in 1740; this was some 36 years before the signing of the Declaration of American Independence by thirteen Colonies. Six years later, two Genizaros, Antonio Casados and Luis Quintana from Belen, filed a petition in writing with the Viceroy of New Spain, as representative of the Indian Pueblos in the Belen area.

The Indians, who called themselves "Apache Caiguas" from Belen, claimed that the Grant was illegal and should be annulled and voided and the Grant returned to the surrounding Indians, since the land in question included Indian pueblos. They further contended that these pueblos had been inhabited continuously in the Belen area, and by Indian tribes, before the Spaniards arrived, and that the Indians had been dispossessed of their lands by the Spanish Land Grant.

The claim of the Genizaros was originally filed in Atexico (in Mexico) before the Viceroy Don Pedro Cebrian Agustin de Fuenclara.

The Viceroy Fuenclara referred the matter to Don Joachin Codallos y Rabal, the Governor in Santa Fe, for full investigation of the Complaint filed and a report of his findings. In compliance with the royal order, Governor Codallos y Rabal cited the parties interested in the proceedings to proceed to Santa Fe for a full-scale hearing and investigation of the petition. The Indians appeared in person and through a Spanish attorney who called himself "El Abogado de los Indios", (The Attorney for the Indians) and whose name was Francisco de Cordova.

Antonio Casados was the main witness for the claim-



ants. His testimony was reduced to writing, as well as that of all other witnesses appearing, and is preserved in the Spanish Archives in Santa Fe. Some of the long-hand transcript is difficult to read and interpret due to the fading of the lettering over the years, some almost illegible writing, and also the old archaic Spanish terms used at the time.

Antonio Casados and Luis Quintana stated, through an Indian interpreter by the name of Francisco Rendon, that they lived in an Indian pueblo within the boundaries of the Belen Land Grant. They did not know their ages in 1746 when they testified at the trial, but it was estimated that they were 38 and 30 years of age. The Genizaro, Antonio Casados, called himself a war captain of the Indian pueblos and could speak Spanish.

They accused the Spaniards, particularly Capt. Diego de Torres and Antonio Salazar, his brother-in-law, of being the leaders of the Spanish colony at Belen who were causing the Indians great extortions, encroaching on their lands to their great damage, which was irreparable.

They petitioned the Viceroy, through his Royal authority, to issue an order to the Spaniards, under penalty of law, for failure to comply with the same, ordering the Spaniards to remove themselves and their families from these Indian lands and that the trespassing Spaniards be forever ejected from causing further damage to the native Indians and their lands.

In their petition, it was further prayed that once these damages are atoned, the pueblo Indians were ready to join the Spaniards against the common enemy, the barbaric Indian tribes who are daily causing havoc to both pueblos and Spaniards. They would then be in a better fortified position to protect the established Catholic Missions in this New Kingdom.

Although Antonio Casados was questioned as to his genuine purpose and intentions in the proceedings by the Governor, nevertheless he was sworn in by requesting that he make the Sign of the Cross and swear in the name of the Lord to tell the truth. As a Genizaro, he had been con-



verted to the Catholic religion and baptized "en pie" or as a grown person.

Casados stated at the trial that as a young Apache, he was sold into the household of Francisco Casados as a domestic, hence the surname of Casados. Antonio further stated that he later married an Indian servant and both went to live in the home of Captain Diego Torres at Belen. This last statement of Casados apparently was damaging and no doubt helped defeat his claim as his previous evidence was to the effect that the Indians were at Belen before the Spaniards. He further stated that at Belen he became a war captain of some Genizaros.

The Governor proceeded with the investigation; nevertheless he took exception to the scandalous, unbridled and brash charges made by the two Genizaros. He stated that Antonio Casados, the leader, was inciting all of the friendly pueblos against the Spaniards, from Belen to the North at Santa Fe, a distance of 25 leagues; that he had led a group of approximately seventy Pueblo Indians to Santa Fe to attend this hearing. Antonio Casados was also rebuked for going outside the Kingdom of New Spain (New Mexico) to Atexico (Mexico) to file his charges before the Viceroy without license or permission from proper authorities to leave this Kingdom.

The Governor further ordered Antonio Casados detained in the military guard house at Santa Fe pending the disposition of the petition, and as a safeguard in preventing Antonio Casados from stirring up the Pueblo Indians into further excitement that might lead to hostilities.

Captain Diego de Torres appeared at the hearing with his brother-in-law, Antonio de Salazar, together with other material witnesses in support of their answers in refuting the Indians' charges. Captain Diego de Torres was the son of Cristobal de Torres, who was an Alferez (Ensign) residing in Albuquerque in 1710. It appears that Diego was a descendant of a military family in the King's service for many years.

The Spaniards denied that any Indian settlements or pueblos existed at the time within the exterior boundaries



of the Belen Land Grant. Diego de Torres stated that he invited approximatey 20 families of the Genizaros to move into the homes of the Spaniards; that the Indians were destitute, hungry and had no place to live, and that he took them into their homes as a Christian act.

Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza signed a declaration that as governor and captain-general of this Kingdom, he had authorized the Land Grant; that the Royal documents were properly drawn in issuance of said Grants to avoid trouble in litigation and discord among the settlers in the future.

Perhaps the most important and valuable source of proof next to the Governor's statement was the verification of the Grant made by Don Nicolas Duran y Chabes. He stated that as Mayor (Alcalde Mayor) and war captain of said settlement and jurisdiction (Belen was at that time under the jurisdiction of Albuquerque), Nicolas Duran de Chabes, as Alcalde of Albuquerque, had jurisdiction of the Belen area.

Alcalde Chabes further testified that by Royal decree he personally went to Belen on November 15, 1740, and gave possession of the Belen Land Grant to Captain Diego de Torres, as agent for all those signing the petition requesting the grant at Belen.

That when he gave possession to the Spaniards, there were no known obstacles or impediments to the issuance of said Royal Grant.

That there were no Indian pueblos; that he took Captain Diego de Torres, the grantee, by the hand and walked him over the new Land Grant in the presence of three witnesses; that they threw stones, pulled grass and made certain utterances and pronouncements customary in said rituals of delivery of title.

Alcalde Chabes further stated that he knew the Genizaros had been taken into the homes of the Spaniards at Belen with the consent of Captain Diego de Torres and the other Spaniards and there were possibly twenty Genizaros that were brought into Belen by Diego de Torres.

That he knows that all of these Indians were converted



into the Catholic Church after being grown Indians, and that they were baptized "en pie"; that he further knows that Antonio Casados was a Caigua Indian: he has known him for approximately four years and that it is Antonio Casados who is the one who is inciting the Indians as a ringleader and causing all the trouble.

That he has acquired a certain degree of high intelligence; that Antonio Casados is not a war captain of the Indians and has never been to his knowledge, and that all of the things and matters that the Indians stated in their declarations are false.

Several other witnesses appeared in support of the Spaniards, some of whom were more unkind and stronger in their expressions against the Indians. For example, one witness stated that the Indians were fugitives from their masters; that they were odious people, vagabonds, thieves and knaves, without any semblance of culture, economy or form of government, and that all of the things stated in the petition by the Indians were lies and unfounded.

After taking considerable testimony from all of the witnesses present at the trial, including approximately 26 handwritten pages, the matter was apparently referred back by Governor Joachin Codallos y Rabal to the Viceroy. However, there is no record as to the final outcome of the proceedings on the complaint, except that history will verify that the original settlers continued in possession of the Belen Land Grant through the years.

The proceedings, aside from the historical value in furnishing further details on the original settlement of the Belen Land Grant by the Spanish colony, served as an important legal affirmation of the Spanish Royal Grant to the small Spanish colony of Captain Diego de Torres and his followers, and helped to discourage further encroaching or disputes over the legal title and boundaries of the Land Grant.



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE MOTHER COLONY

The early settlement in Belen proved a mother colony for other communities in New Mexico, as far away as Catron, Guadalupe, Lincoln and Torrance counties, plus many communities in Valencia County.

All of these pioneer Spanish families assisted in the early development of these new frontiers in the expansion and creation of a new era in New Mexico. They played a key role in settling new communities, bringing with them their culture and their Christian doctrine, founding new communities, schools and churches, and even new counties in a growing territory that was expanding rapidly in all directions from the heart of the mother colony on the Rio Grande.

Soon after the settlement of Belen, in the early 18th century, Baltazar Baca, one of the original settlers, and his family, moved to the Laguna Land Grant which had been acquired by him in western Valencia County.

Many families from the valley, feeling that it was safer and that the Indian tribes were somewhat under control, moved in the early 18th century to Cubero, Seboyeta, Moquino and Atarque, and established new communities in western Valencia County, up to the present Arizona and New Mexico line. Other families, desiring to extend their pasture land and look for greener pastures, moved to Socorro and Magdalena. The families making up this new immigration into Socorro and what was later Catron County, were the Bacas, Torres, Chavez, Sanchez, Jaramillo and Trujillos. Many of the descendants of these families today are not fully aware of the close relationship between the original families in Valencia County and the newly established settlements in Socorro and Catron counties.

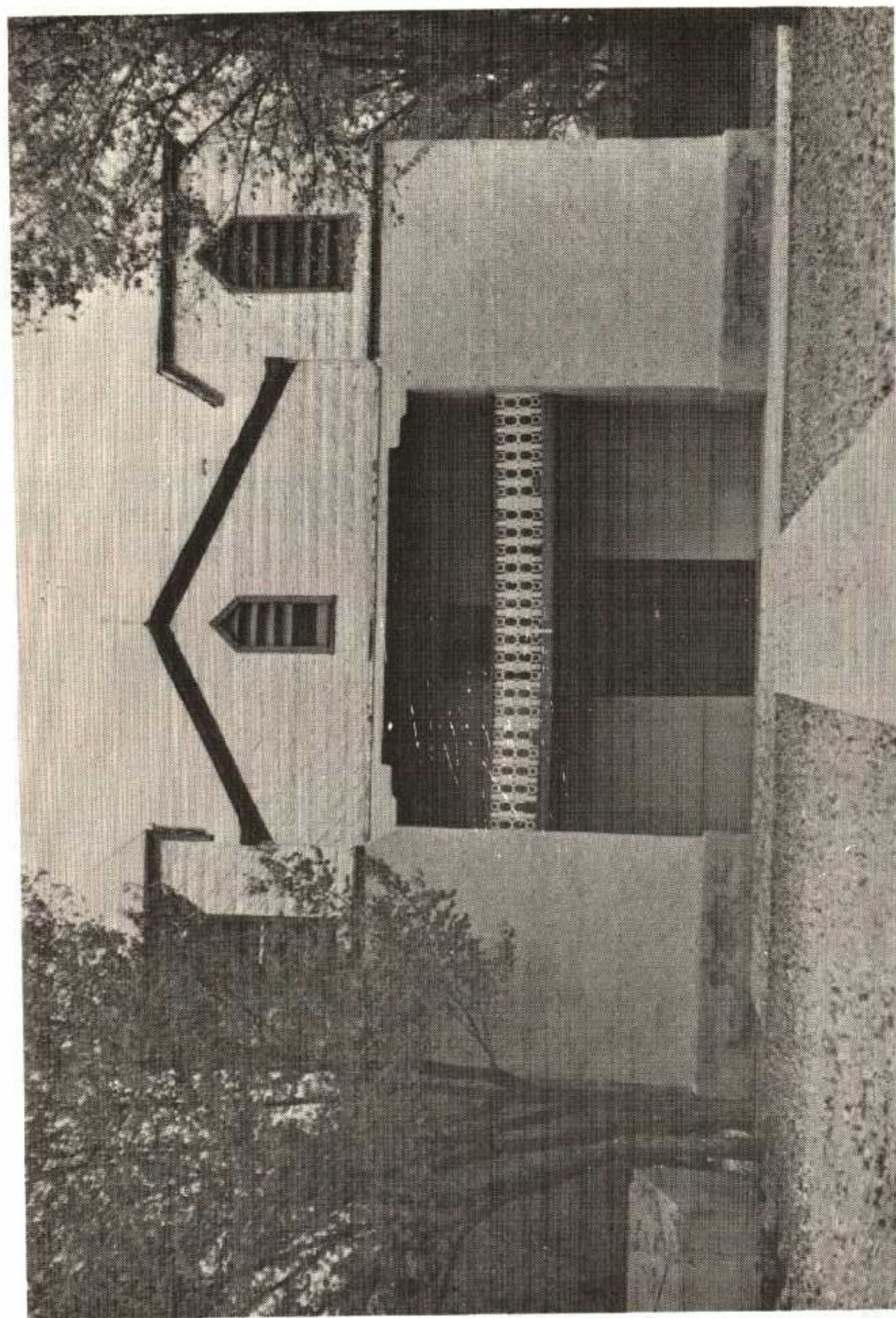
The Aragon, for example, started the community of



Aragon, as well as the Trujillos and Castillos, who settled in the Datil area. Many who became restless in the valley and realizing that there were new lands open for the mere asking in the Guadalupe County area, and as far away as Lincoln County, migrated with all their personal belongings to establish some of the first spearhead settlements in these new founded communities.

The Oteros, who had originally settled the San Clemente area north of Belen, and what is particularly the Los Lunas area, were soon grazing their large sheep flocks and later their cattle herds in Torrance County and the New Plains area which had plentiful and abundant grass and water. Soon thereafter, they came in conflict with Texans who were moving their herds from the East and the impending and resulting gun battles of the Estancia Valley in which Manuel Otero, father of Ed Otero and Manuel B. Otero, lost his life in the late 80's.





Tome Church, "Nuestra Senora de la Limpia Concepcion." The thick adobe walls of the church offered a sanctuary to the local inhabitants from the Comanche raids.



## CHAPTER XIV

### VALLEY MISSIONS

History identifies the original Spanish settlers of the Rio Abajo with the Land Grants and the Catholic Missions established in that period, but it is doubtful if these colonists could have survived without the help of the Isleta Indians.

The area of the Rio Abajo, in the early Spanish times, was limited to the Rio Grande, from Corrales on the north to Sabinal on the south. Corrales is in Sandoval County, north of Albuquerque, west of the Rio Grande. Sabinal is about 12 miles south of Belen, in Socorro county, also west of the river.

The land grants extend from the Sandia or Manzano Mountains on the east, to the Rio Puerco on the west. Originally all jurisdiction, both ecclesiastical and civil, was administered from Isleta Pueblo.

The first Spanish settlers chose Isleta as headquarters for the civil government as well as ecclesiastical and military or defense purposes. The organization of a militia from Isleta was a practical approach. The Isletans were a large group of friendly Indians who served as a bulwark against the marauding Apaches and Comanches.

On more than one occasion the Isletans came to the aid of the aid of the new settlers when they were threatened by the savage tribes.

The Isleta mother church was founded in the early 1600's and is one of the oldest Catholic churches in New Mexico which still survive today.

As the local settlements, or rancherias, in the valley began to grow, the local people applied to the King of Spain, through the Governor in Santa Fe, for lands to support their growing families. They needed additional pasturage grounds for their livestock and firewood.



One of the first Land Grants authorized by the King, through the Governor at Santa Fe, was the San Clemente Land Grant in the area of Los Lunas. This Land Grant originally was made to Mateo de Sandoval y Manzanares and later acquired by his wife, Ana de Sandoval. The Grant was issued in 1716 and contained approximately ninety thousand acres. This grant was settled by Domingo Luna in the late 1700's and subsequently claimed by his descendants, the Lunas of Los Lunas.

The people of Tome followed suit and made application for a land grant in that area. This grant was made to J. Barela and others in 1739 and contained approximately 122,000 acres. The Tome Land Grant is one of the last Spanish Land Grants which is still possessed today by the descendants of the original settlers. The land grant is still used in common to pasture livestock some 225 years from the date of the original grant.

The Tajique, Torreon and Manzano grants were authorized later, between 1830 and 1840. At that time all of these communities, located in the Manzano Mountains, were a part of Valencia County.

The Nicolas Duran y Chavez Land Grant was issued to Nicolas Duran y Chavez and his immediate family in 1739 and includes the lands in the area of Los Chavez, west of the Rio Grande and bounded by the San Clemente Grant on the north, and the Belen Land Grant on the south.

There were also other small land grants in the area, such as the Joaquin Sedillo Grant, south of Isleta, and the Bosque de Los Pinos in the area of what is now termed Bosque Farms immediately south of Isleta. The Bosque de Los Pinos was claimed by the Otero family from early days and finally acquired by them.

### The Development of Tome

There is no community in the Valley that has a richer historical heritage than Tome. The Land Grant covers the historical site of the Tome Dominguez y Mendoza Hacienda, which was established in this area prior to the Indian Re-



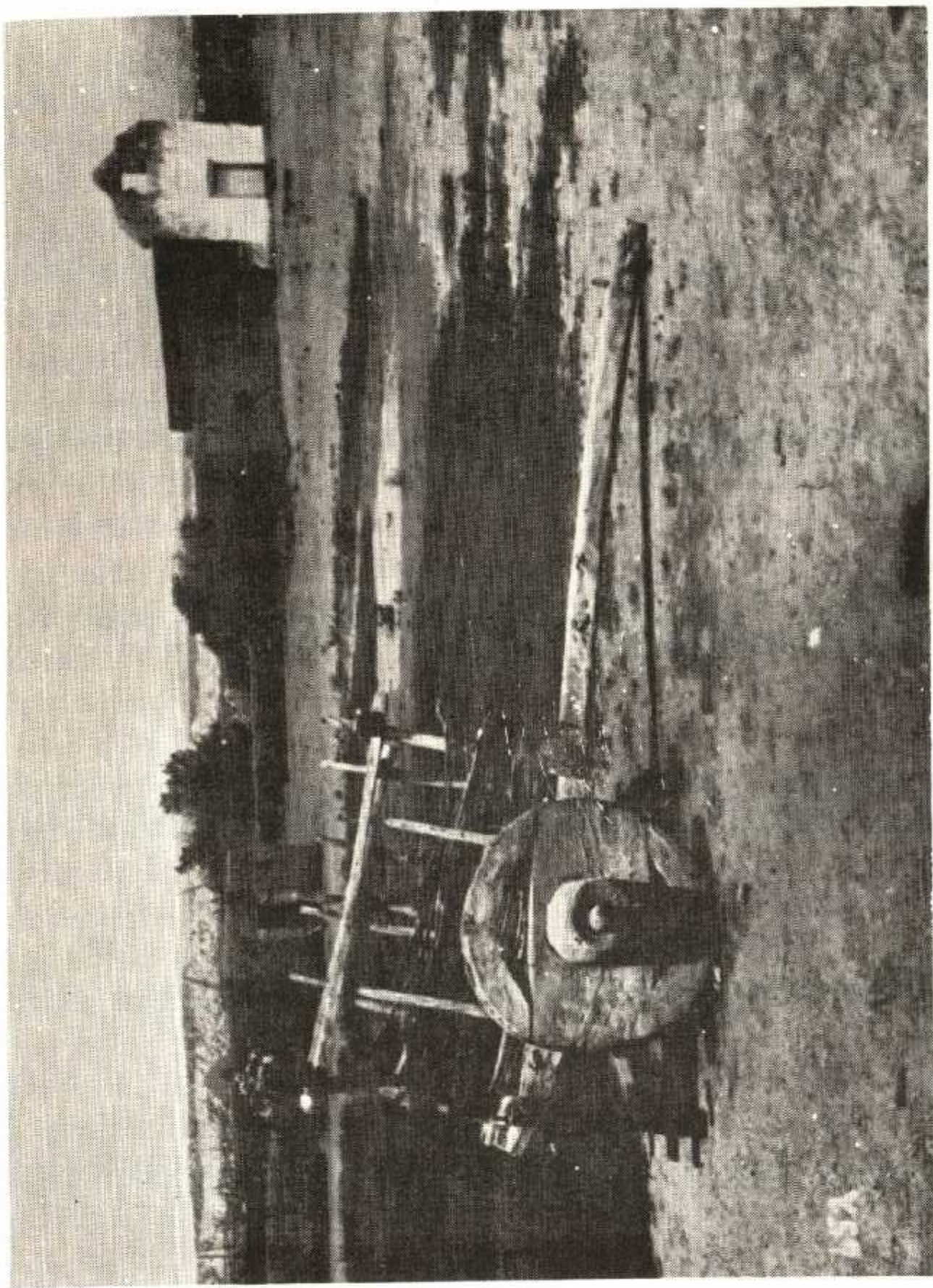
volt of 1680. Although there is no record that the Tome Dominguez family returned to Tome, nevertheless, after the Reconquest, the new group found the valley attractive and practical. The valley was fertile and the hills were abundant with good pasture for their livestock.

Soon after the establishment of the Land Grant, a mission was founded at Tome in 1750. This mission served the spiritual needs of the residents of Peralta, Valencia and the Belen area. The Town of Tome has always been associated with the patron saint "Nuestra Senora de La Limpia Concepcion."

Possibly there is no community, again, that suffered more from the raids of the Apaches and Comanches than Tome. Tome was practically wiped out by the savage tribes on more than one occasion in the late 70's. In 1776 the Comanches raided Tome and approximately 23 persons were massacred. On August 23, 1791, El Conde de Gigos acknowledged a letter from the Governor of New Mexico advising him of the Apache raid on Tome. This document verified that the Natages Tribe of the Apaches had just raided the Town of Tome. It further acknowledged the debt of gratitude due the Isletas, who came to the rescue of Tome. Particularly praised was the Isleta Captain Taschelnate, who led the battle against the attacking Apaches and prevented total destruction of the Town. This document indicates that the local residents barricaded themselves in the Catholic Church, which had adobe walls five feet thick. In this particular attack, some thirty-three Spanish residents of Tome were killed.

The Town of Tome in the early days, as was the case with most Spanish communities, was established around a plaza. The plaza, in reality, was more of a fort, all houses built in a round or circular form around the plaza, and the entrances were barricaded in case of an Indian attack. All livestock were brought inside the plaza at night, including oxen, sheep, cattle and the few horses available in those days. If the enemy was on the warpath, guards were posted at night, known as the "serenos", to give the alarm in case of an attack.





Typical carreta made from cottonwood trees. Served as only wheel transportation in New Mexico for over 200 years.



The 1790 census of Tome lists Lt. Don Juan Bautista Montano as the Acting Comandante of the town. He was a weaver by occupation, 63 years of age, and married to Rosalia Jaramillo, listed as Spanish, 57 years of age. They had two sons, one 19 years of age, and one 17.

Many of the local residents in those days were farmers, livestock raisers, carpenters, silversmith, shepherders, and one was listed as a tailor. The people were entirely self-sufficient, providing themselves with all the necessities of life from the products of the soil and the livestock, in addition to the wild game. Their spiritual needs were served by the local Catholic Church, which was the only hope that carried them through many of their trials and tribulations in the early days. The colony continued to grow, and by 1790 there were approximately 120 households.

A few of the members of the local militia had the "escopeta" as a firearm. However, the majority of the local army had only the bow and arrow to protect them against the constant Indian raids. Nearby and to the east, and the plains beyond, roamed the Comanches and the Apaches in large numbers. Some of the roaming tribes lived in the Manzano Mountains nearby, in the area known as "Comanche Canyon." The name of the canyon survives today, but it has a very special meaning for the people of Tome.

Governor Bartolome Baca established his hacienda in the vicinity of Belen in the early 1800's. Bartolome Baca served as Governor of New Mexico from 1823 to 1825. He served as the third governor under Mexican rule. Governor Baca also served as Captain of the militia for the Rio Abajo, and at one time served as Alcalde of Tome and Belen in the early 1800's. Governor Baca acquired large holdings of land on the east side of the Manzano Mountains, known as the Estancia Valley. It is estimated that at one time the land grant of Baca on the east side of the mountain contained over a million acres, where he pastured his large flock of sheep and herds of cattle and horses.

Manuel A. Otero, of the distinguished Otero family, originally from Valencia, moved to the Tome area and located a grist mill in the area of La Costancia, which he



named. The grist mill was a water-wheel type of a mill which was operated by the flow of water taken from the local acequia. Wheat and corn were plentiful in the rich valley, and soon the mill was grinding all of the corn and wheat up to capacity. The local farmers had no money to pay the miller, so they paid him in kind for milling their grain.

Soon, however, difficulties developed between the farmers in the upper ditch and Don Manuel A. Otero. The farmers felt that Senor Otero was using too much of the water for his mill and the farms were suffering. The matter ended up in the Juez de Paz, or Justice of the Peace Court, where an amicable agreement was reached as to the use and disbursement of the water as between the parties affected.

Prior to the death of Governor Baca, Manuel A. Otero claimed to have purchased the Estancia Land Grant from the Baca family. Manuel B. Otero, son of old Manuel, decided to take possession of the Estancia Land Grant in the late 1880's. However, the Whitney family of Boston, late-come millionaires, also claimed the land grant. In true western style and tradition, bad blood developed between the Whitney and Otero factions. Both of them were well-surrounded by their vaqueros. At a "shoot-out" between the Otero supporters and the Whitney faction, which was partly arranged and partly by accident, Joel P. Whitney was shot eleven times in the blood battle that ensued. Manuel B. Otero was less fortunate and lost his life. James Whitney was brought to trial for the murder of Manuel B. Otero, but the evidence was not sufficient to convict him. Litigation over the land grant continued for many years, but the United States Government did not recognize the validity of the land grant to either Baca or his successors in title. The land was subsequently thrown open to new settlers under the Homestead Act.

During the time that the Oteros were powerful in the Rio Abajo, Tome was the county seat of Valencia County, from 1852 to 1872. Manuel A. Otero served as probate judge from 1874 to 1876. The old courthouse and jail at Tome

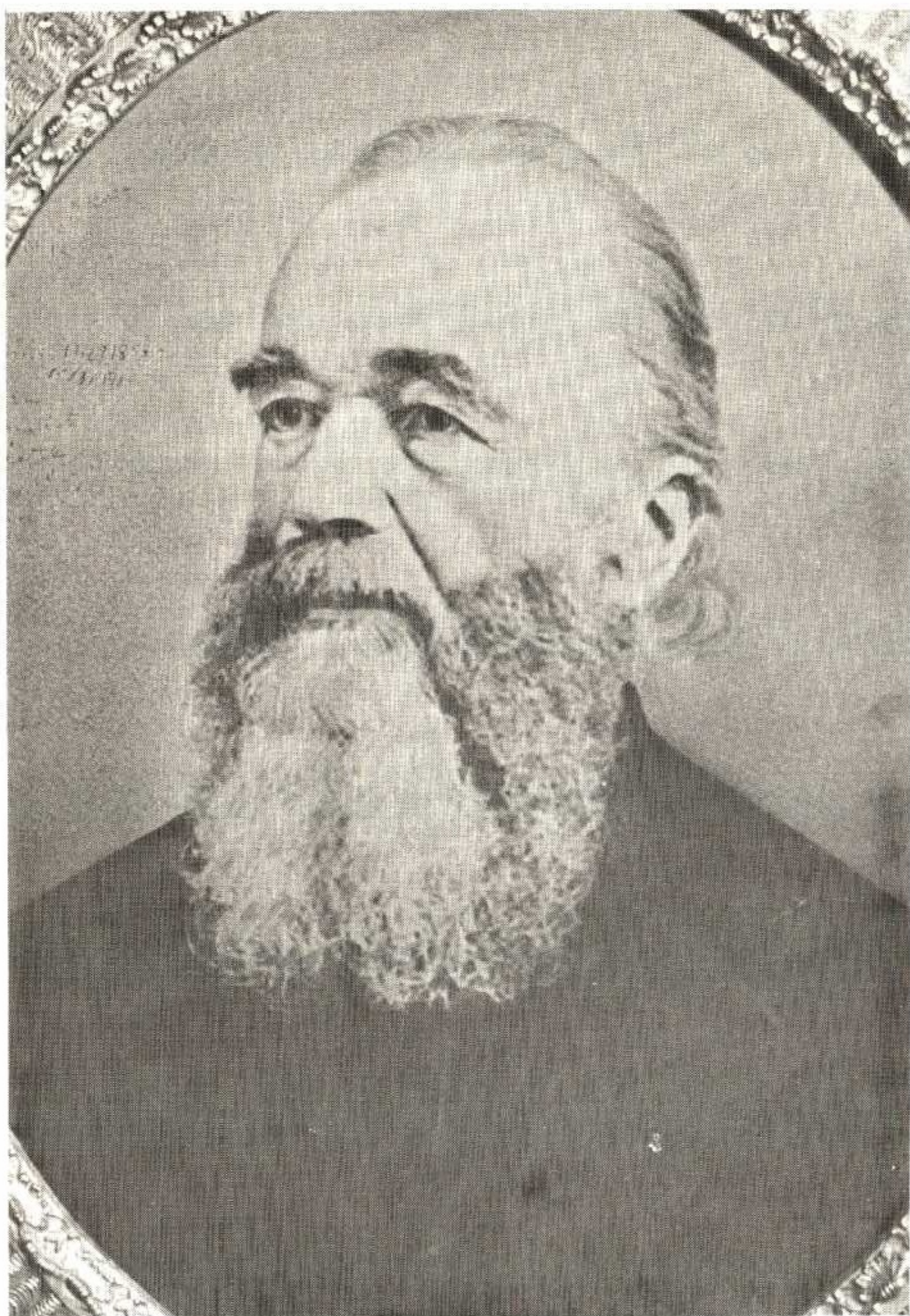


still stand today on the property of Eliseo Salazar, and over the door of the courthouse, in brown sandstone, is carved the date the courthouse was established, and the name of Manuel A. Otero, probate judge. During the transition period, the probate judge had acquired considerable power and jurisdiction and was more powerful than the justice of the peace in matters of jurisdiction and authority. Soon, however, the probate judge declined in power and authority and the office was limited mostly to probate matters of estates.

Father Juan B. Railliere came as a young French priest to Tome in the late 1880's. He found the people friendly and rich in culture, but weak in formal education. He immediately encouraged the education of the children, and soon schools were established, at least in the fundamentals of the 3 R's. The teacher was paid from a fund known as "La Capitacion", which was a per capita fee of \$1.00 per head of household per year to pay the school teacher. One of the first teachers at Tome was Jose Silva, who was paid \$22.00 per month from this fund. Also, the children had to contribute the firewood for the stove during the two or three month school term. Father Railliere also encouraged agriculture, introducing new plants and agricultural methods. He himself established one of the largest vineyards in the Valley, where he had over 2,000 grape vines. He produced some very fine wines which were consumed in large quantities as a local drink, and a very popular drink.

Father Railliere also established a convent. Young people were trained in a formal music education, learning to read music, sing and play musical instruments, particularly the church organ. He soon developed one of the best choirs in the Valley. It is said that oftentimes he rewarded his choir when he was particularly pleased with them, with a drink of vino, and that resulted in making his choir more harmonious than ever. Father Railliere writes in his diary, which he kept both in Spanish and French, that he ministered to the missions at Valencia and Peralta. He makes note of the fact that while he was at Peralta he stayed at the old Henry Connelley residence. The home was owned





Beloved Father Juan B. Ralliere, French priest and educator who was at Tome for many years.



at that time by a descendant of the Connelley family. Many tenants lived in the large home at the time.

Father Railliere also makes note of the many floods in the Tome area in the late 1800's, and mentions that the old home of Governor Baca was destroyed in the flood of 1884. A flood at a later date destroyed practically all of the homes of Tome and the local residents were forced to flee to the hills for their lives.

At this time, the old community was left destitute. All of their supplies and foodstuffs and grains were washed down the river and an appeal for help was sent to Belen and Albuquerque for foodstuffs and assistance to the disaster area. Most of the merchants were very helpful.

Father Railliere states that John Becker of Belen, the local merchant, immediately sent assistance. However, he lamented that "El Millionario," Don Felipe Chavez of Belen, had sent him a lot of good advice, but not a pound of help. Father Railliere constructed a boat to distribute the foodstuff. He described the plaza of Tome as being under several feet of water. Where the water was not too deep, he would hitch his stallion roan horse to the boat and thereby maneuver the boat in the more shallow areas of the flood.

When Jesus R. Sanchez, father of Adelino Sanchez, was serving as representative in the Legislature from Valencia County, Father Railliere used to refer to him as "Jesus R. Sanchez de la Legislatura." Apparently there were quite a number of Jesus Sanchezes and this would identify the particular Jesus.

It was noted that the land grant had not issued the deed to the Church, or the deed became lost. So an appeal was made to the land grant to issue a new deed at a special meeting of the land grant.

The meeting was held at the parochial school of Father Railliere. Elias Romero was one of the members of the board of commissioners at the time, the father of Trinnie Romero. Boleslo Romero, a former president of the Tome Land Grant, is also a descendant of the original settlers.

The old plaza of Tome is located immediately west



of the present State Road 47, in the vicinity of the old Tome church, and is now overgrown with huge cottonwoods. However, the plaza is still respected as the old town plaza and is used more as a park area. No buildings have been constructed there.

Eliseo Salazar, who served in the House of Representatives in the early 1930's and is now 75 years of age, can still point to the old Apache trails, the Comanche headquarters to the east, and the old trail used by the Pony Express over the Manzano Mountains in the early days.

Tome has a rich historical heritage which is preserved and respected by the descendants of the original families to this date. Many of the Bacas, Marquez, Silvas, Padillas, Torres and Salazars, whose families founded the original site, still reside in the area and manage the remainder of the land grant. The ownership had now been transferred to a modern stock corporation, with the common owners in interest having been furnished a share of stock as evidence of ownership.

Immediately to the north of Tome was the Plaza de San Fernandez de los Silvas. This was a much smaller community and contained only eighteen households. The Comandante of this community was Lucas Perea, Mestizo, carpintero, 60 years of age, married to Juana Victoria Aragon, Spanish, 40 years of age. They had five sons residing with them.





Governor (1845) Don Jose Chavez y Castillo, the father of Don Felipe Chavez. Jose was in turn the son of Governor (1822) Francisco Xavier Chavez. The latter was first native-born governor of New Mexico.



## CHAPTER XV

### LAST DAYS OF SPANISH RULE AND THE MEXICAN PERIOD

The explorer, Zebulon Pike, may have given Belen and the Rio Abajo its first place in the sun — “the economic sun” of the Southwest.

After his journey into New Mexico in 1807, Pike wrote his famous report which fired the ambition and the enthusiasm to engage in overland trade.

The report was probably the most outstanding event in those days of ending Spanish rule and Mexican Independence.

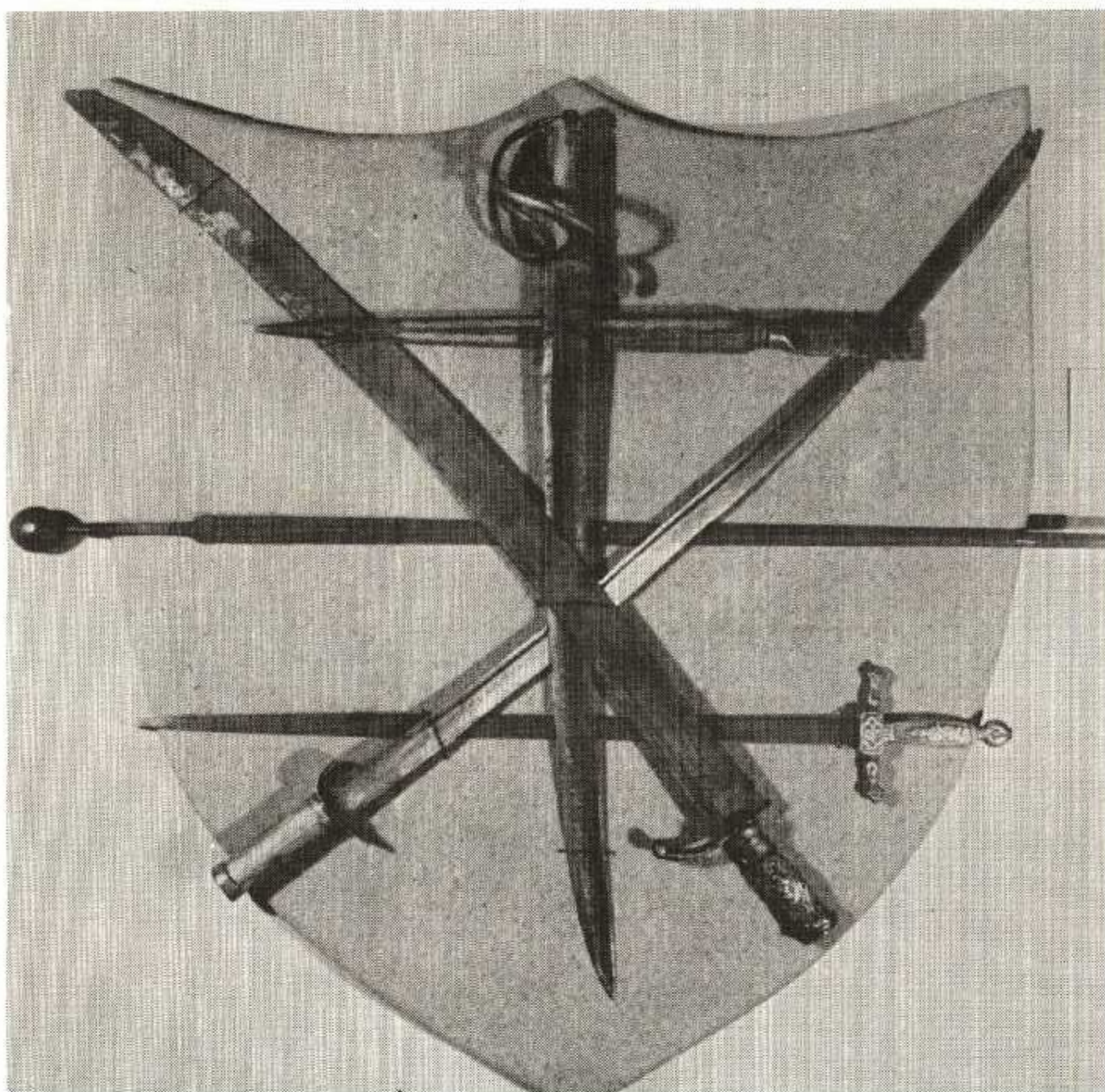
Just what was the purpose of Zebulon Pike’s jaunt to New Mexico has never been satisfactorily explained; whether he came as a spy or in peace. Captured near where La Junta, Colorado, now stands, he was taken prisoner to Santa Fe, and after being entertained at Albuquerque, he was taken to Chihuahua.

No doubt, this trip carried him through Belen, although such an event is not recorded. The fact remains that upon publication of his reports on the tremendous demand and profit from trade with New Mexico, the Santa Fe-Chihuahua trade was born.

This meant to Belen and the Rio Abajo—“a place in the sun.” Under the last years of Spanish rule this overland trail was clandestinely carried on. With the exchange of government, from Spanish to Mexican, it grew in tremendous importance and Belen and the Rio Abajo came into their own.

New opportunities in commerce gave rise to a new aristocracy. The wealthy land owners and sheep barons, the Ricos of the Rio Abajo, the families of the Armijo, Chavez, Baca, Yrissarri, and Gutierrez, grew wealthy in the overland trade over the Santa Fe, Chihuahua and California routes.





Spanish swords and lances in use in the 18th and 19th Centuries.



No longer did the scions of wealthy families go to Chihuahua and Durango for their education; they went to St. Louis, New York and Washington.

These were the days of the Mountain Men, Kit Carson, the Bents, the Beaubiens and others who settled in New Mexico, became New Mexican citizens, often marrying into native families. At the same time, they were forming a veritable Fifth Column which a quarter of a century later was to end with the union of New Mexico with the American nation, the United States.

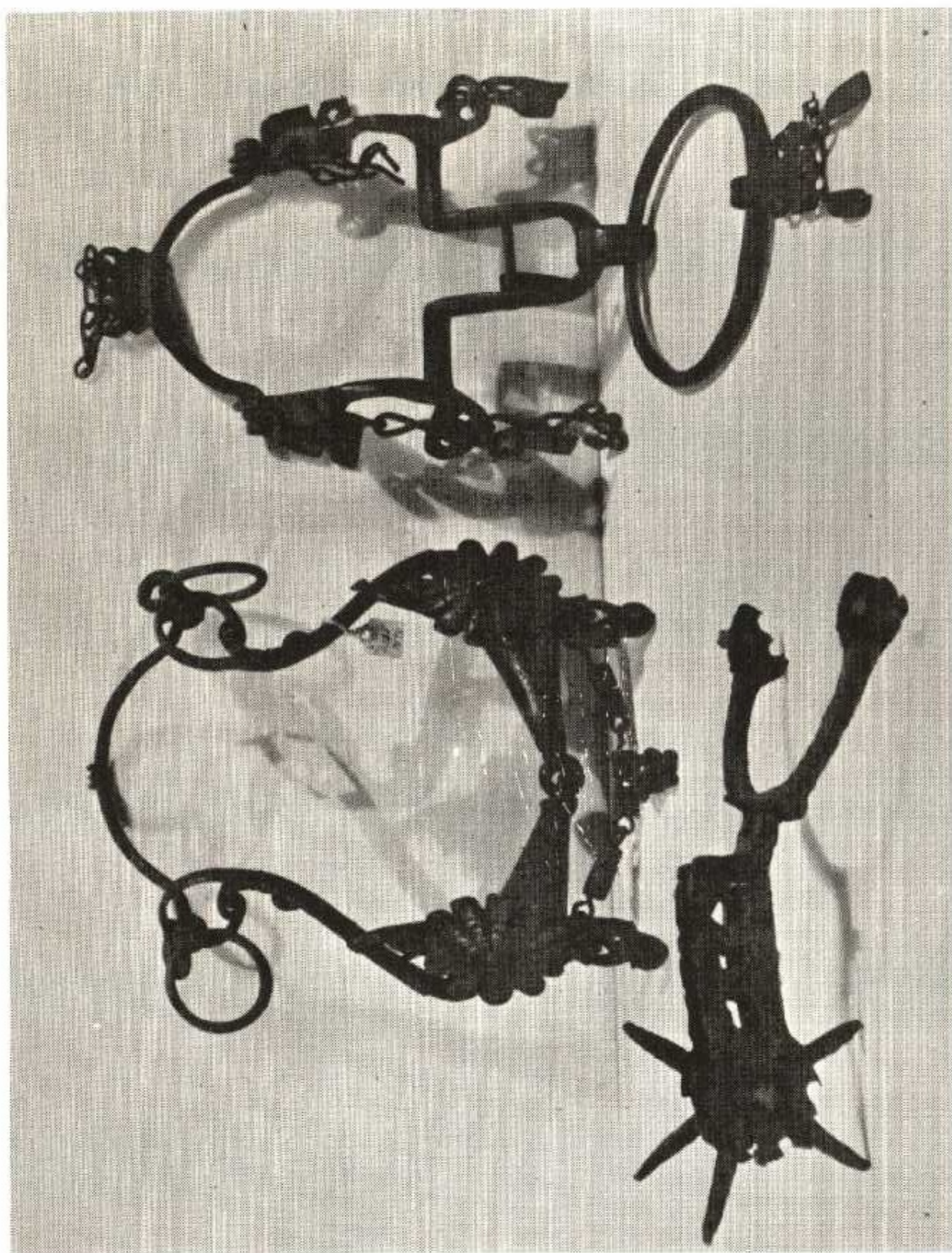
The New Mexican took to the overland trade like a duck to water. As early as 1826, they began sending trade wagons across the plains and by 1843 were in control of more than half the trade. The Rio Abajo, and particularly Belen, was most active in this trade.

A related incident occurred in February, 1843, when Antonio Jose Chavez, son of Francisco Chavez, enroute from Santa Fe to Independence, Mo., with a large train, was murdered by desperadoes. His train consisted of two wagons, some 55 horses, servants and trade products from New Mexico, and some 12,000 dollars in gold. Chavez, with his entire party, was slain by Texas bandits under one John M. McDaniel.

With American occupation, the United States realized the value of Belen as a frontier post and the garrison maintained there during Spanish and Mexican times was continued, and it prospered as an important factor post on a famous trading route to the West. The Santa Fe Trail began at Independence and led to Santa Fe, from which the trade route continued as the Santa Fe-Chihuahua Trail.

The 1790 Census gives a graphic picture of Rio Abajo up to the close of the 18th century, and approaching the period of the Zebulon Pike exploration trip and subsequent report. These were the years when Spain was in decline as a world power and New Mexico, far removed from the seat of government and never a source of revenue to the Spanish crown, was more and more thrown on its own resources. New Mexico was only a frontier outpost to guard Spain's colonial empire in North America.





Spanish bits and spur — 18th Century.



Eastwardly the "March of Empire" had started. Already, Americans had pushed beyond the Alleghenies. The purchase of Louisiana in 1803 gave impetus to the ever present question in the minds of American statesmen, "What lies beyond?"

Spain was ever secretive about her North American empire. Intercourse and trading with the East was forbidden. The only commerce of the Province was over the Chihuahua Trail. Caravans left Santa Fe yearly and Belen was one of the main stops on this journey. This trade was the only outlet New Mexico had for its products — sheep, wool, hides and buffalo robes. In exchange, manufactured articles were brought in from Chihuahua, which was the distributing point.

Attempts to open trade with New Mexico were made as early as 1804 when Bautiste Le Lande, a French-Creole, as agent for a merchant from Kaskaskia, Illinois, made his way to Santa Fe with a load of trade goods. A year later, one Pursely is said to have come. More efforts were made by French traders from Louisiana to venture into New Mexico about this same time and perhaps later.

Fifteen years after Pike's venturesome trip, the news of Mexican Independence reached Santa Fe on February 5, 1822. A gala ceremony was held at which Don Facundo Melgares, the last Spanish governor, acted as master of ceremonies.

In Belen, as in other communities, the event was properly celebrated. Actually, the "Grito de Dolores," the Mexican shot heard around the world, was but a faint echo in New Mexico. The change in government apparently meant little to the average New Mexican. But its repercussions were tremendous. Trade with the United States was thrown open and there was a market for products of New Mexico and available unknown articles of manufacture brought over the Santa Fe Trail.

A successful counter-revolution was plotted and organized in the Rio Abajo, particularly at Belen, Tome and Peralta, in the 1840's, preceding the Mexican War with the United States.



An earlier ill-advised uprising and counter-revolt saw the execution of two governors and the cruel death of many partisans. Governor Perez was beheaded and Juan Gonzales, a San Juan Indian, was elected governor.

A former governor, Manuel Armijo, a native of Lemitar, first joined in the uprising, but he was ousted by Perez from a lucrative tax position. Upon election of Gonzales as governor, a post Armijo apparently expected, the ex-governor did a turn-about, journeyed to the Rio Abajo, where at Belen and Peralta, he plotted a counter-revolution. Efforts were first made to have Mariano Chavez, also a former governor, head the counter-movement. Chavez declined in favor of Armijo and accompanied him as second in command.

On appeal from Armijo, President Santa Ana of Mexico sent a contingent of Dragoons to help the counter-revolutionists. Colonel Munoz of Vera Cruz Dragoons brought with him a colonel's commission for Armijo.

The Revolutionists were utterly defeated. Gonzales summarily shot at the orders of Armijo, his former comrade, and Manuel Armijo was installed as governor.

A second episode of importance during this period was the so-called "Texas Invasion." In 1841, President Mirabeau of the Lone Star Republic of Texas organized and sent to New Mexico an expedition, purportedly for the purpose of establishing friendly commercial relations. Actually, this was a punitive expedition for the purpose of taking over all New Mexico to the Rio Grande, which Texas claimed.

This ill-fated expedition was captured in two separate detachments by Mexican forces under Colonel Archuleta and Captain Damacio Salazar. Armijo took full credit. The Texas prisoners were marched on foot to Chihuahua and hence to Mexico City. The journey to Chihuahua was a veritable predecessor of the "Bataan Death March" in the Philippines in the early in the early part of World War II. From this incident came and was continued the traditional enmity between the "Tejano" and the New Mexicans. The Civil War was never mentioned as such among the natives of New



Mexico. It was, instead, more commonly called "The War With the Texans."

History records the march of the Texas prisoners through Valencia, Peralta, Casa Colorada and La Joya, but Belen is not mentioned on their itinerary.

The (Mormon) Battalion apparently passed through Belen in 1846. In his history entitled "Conquest of New Mexico and Arizona," George St. Phillip Cooke records this note: Oct. 1, 1846 — "The quartermaster crossed over to Valencia this morning, seeking mules. At Valencia resides widow C. (Chavez), whose husband, Antonio Jose Chavez, was murdered by Americans a few years ago near Independence, Missouri."

And, a quotation by John T. Hughes on Doniphan's Expedition about the same time:

"Leaving Doniphan in command, on September 6th, while Kearny was at Albuquerque, there arrived a deputation of some 30 well-dressed Mexicans who saluted him as Governor and assured him the Rio Abajo was peaceful; they requested protection for their families, which being assured, they departed. On the 7th the Army arrived at Peralta. This was the home of the wealthy Chavez family whose sons were educated in the States. The Chavez family was very friendly. Five miles from Peralta, the Americans reached San Tome, a small town containing about 800 inhabitants. Tome was the southernmost point of this trip of General Kearny, who returned to Santa Fe."



## CHAPTER XVI

### RICOS OF THE RIO ABAJO

General Manuel Armijo had abandoned the defense of Canoncito Pass and fled south with his Mexican dragoons. It is not known whether he felt defense against the American invaders was impossible, or whether his palm had been generously greased. This has been a debatable issue for more than a century.

Weight of opinion seems to favor the latter conclusion; that the palm salve was applied by Don Santiago Magoffin, under, if not specific and understandable authority and direction of Senator Thomas Hart of Missouri and from President James Polk.

Colonel Diego Archuleta, who would have fought, had no alternative than to obey his commander's orders to dismiss his New Mexico militia.

Be this as it may, the bloodless conquest of New Mexico was an accomplished fact and on the 18th day of August, 1846, at the hour of 6:00 P. M., General Stephen Watts Kearny at the head of his Army of the West entered the ancient capital of Santa Fe. He was welcomed by Lt. Governor Juan Bautista Vigil y Alarid and a committee of some fifty prominent citizens escorted his party to the Palace of the Governors where a sumptuous repast was served, all of which prompted a young lady friend of the writer to quip, "Imagine throwing a cocktail party for your conquerors."

One of General Kearny's first visitors was Don Jose Leandro Perea of Bernalillo, one of the most influential and wealthy New Mexican of his day, reputed at one time to have owned over a million head of sheep. He was accompanied by his nephew, Francisco Perea, later the distinguished American soldier, Colonel Francisco Perea and also destined to represent New Mexico as a delegate in Congress. Edu-



cated in St. Louis University, the young Perea spoke English fluently and acted as interpreter between Perea and Kearny.

The purpose of his visit was obvious. As the Patriarch and rightful representative of the wealthy, landed aristocracy of the "Rio Abajo", the area as we now know as the Middle Rio Grande Valley, Perea called to ascertain the intended policy of the American government, to offer his assistance, financial and otherwise, and to insure recognition and protection for himself and the other wealthy residents of the Territory. Kearny welcomed Perea whom he later visited at the latter's home in Bernalillo and it is said offered him the Governorship of New Mexico, which Perea declined. Kearny countered by naming Antonio Jose Otero, of the wealthy Valencia County Oteros, and a close relative of Perea, as a member of New Mexico's first Supreme Court. Although not trained in law, he served with distinction and honor. U. S. Senator Joe Montoya is a descendant of this Perea family.

### COLONIAL NEW MEXICO

The first 80 years of Colonial New Mexico and up to the 1680 Rebellion is not a happy story. Spain's policy toward this frontier province was definitely for the few and by the few. Those factors which almost resulted in the abandonment of the Colony in 1605 persisted throughout this first Colonial period and even through the second Colonial period, after the De Vargas reconquest in 1693. The clergy, zealously worked for the conversion and betterment of the Indian, while the ruling classes were interested only in exploiting the Indian and the people. The Governors were invariably Crown appointments; impoverished noblemen with high sounding titles, Dukes, Marquesses and Knights of Santiago, who came to New Mexico to recoup their shattered fortunes from an impoverished country.

The policy of Spain toward this frontier province was to keep its people isolated. Intercourse with the outside world was discouraged, the development of industries not permitted and education of the masses was completely ne-



glected. With the decline of Spain as a world power, the province was even more neglected.

In the year 1812, Ferdinand VII called a general Cortes to which all its colonies were invited to send delegates to meet and take inventory of the rapidly deteriorating values of what was once a world empire. New Mexico sent as its first and only delegate, Don Pedro Pino who in his report to the Court gave a vivid picture of the isolation and hardships of life and poverty which existed in this distant outpost of Spanish rule in New Spain.

Despite all this, sturdy yeomen had created an empire which, though purely pastoral in its aspects, had developed a landed aristocracy composed of the few owners of vast haciendas, rich in lands, and sheep, whose broad estates were cultivated by an army of servants and retainers held in a benign sort of servitude. There were only two classes, the rich and the poor, the Patron and the Peon, and few of the latter ever emerged from the economic and social strata wherein they were born.

The only source of supply for other than home raised products and primitive crafts, was by trade with Chihuahua which held this monopoly, and all manufactured articles came to Chihuahua by way of Vera Cruz, and on to New Mexico, a long road of some two thousand miles. Yearly caravans journeyed from New Mexico to Chihuahua, taking the products the Ricos exchanged for goods from the outside world. Exports from New Mexico were sheep, horses, buffalo hides, dried meat, tobacco, furs and sometimes copper vessels and products of their primitive looms.

With the ever-spreading American march of empire, beyond the Missouri westward, from time to time dim reports came to enterprising American merchants and traders of New Mexico and its population where there was an unlimited market for trade articles, almost unobtainable, by a hungry people who, in exchange, had raw products which found a ready market in the States.

The earliest attempt to establish trade with New Mexico was when the Mallett brothers sent an expedition with trade goods from the French settlements in Mississippi.



This was in the year 1739. In 1802, a trader named Purcell wandered into New Mexico; he remained in Santa Fe plying his trade as a carpenter.

In 1804 a Yankee, William Morrison, of Kakaskia, Illinois, sent some wagons with trade goods by one Batiste La Lande. This agent disposed of his goods in Santa Fe at a handsome profit, liked the climate and, forgetting to report to his benefactor, remained to establish a family. And so they came, clandestinely, for such trade was strictly forbidden by Spanish law, and risking arrest, prison and confiscation of their goods.

The need was too great and the profit such that once started, the trade could not be stopped. With the coming of Mexican independence in 1823, the situation changed and although it opened a new source of income for the Mexican custom and ruling officials, even with excessive taxes levied, the trade was profitable. And the New Mexican was quick to grasp these opportunities.

By 1826, New Mexican caravans were traveling the Santa Fe and other trails, and by 1843 had monopolized more than fifty percent of the caravan trade. These wagon trains were adding wealth to the Ricos who were the only ones who could afford to engage in this commerce.

They were enterprising men, these early 19th century ricos and their first generation of offspring. Colonel Francisco Perea, the same one who, as a young man, accompanied his uncle to interview General Kearny in the year 1846, drove 20,000 head of sheep to California where he disposed of them at a veritable fortune.

Antonio Jose Otero, the same whom Kearny named to the Territory's first Supreme Court, as a young man, ran 40,000 head of sheep and likewise made several trips overland to California, returning with handsome profits.

Jose Antonio Chavez, a cousin of the Pereas and son of New Mexico's first governor under Mexican rule, of whom we shall tell later, in February, 1843, left Santa Fe for Independence, Kansas, with five servants, two wagons and fifty five mules. Due to inclement weather, the party was obliged to abandon one wagon. Near what is now



known as Chavez Creek, they were waylaid by a band of ruffians led by the Texas bandit, John McDaniel. Chavez was robbed of \$12,000 in gold and murdered.

Not only the Santa Fe Trail, but the Chihuahua Trail beckoned these New Mexican ricos. Nicolas T. Armijo nephew of the Mexican General Manuel Armijo, who hesitated to oppose Kearny at Canoncito, engaged extensively in overland commerce to Chihuahua and California, profitably engaged in the mercantile business in California, St. Louis and in Chihuahua, and in his latter years traveled extensively in Europe.

Felipe Chavez, grandson of Francisco Xavier Chavez, first Mexican Governor of New Mexico, increased his patrimony by engaging in overland commerce, and in the sheep business and financed early American merchants, among them the Beckers of Belen and the Hunings of Los Lunas. His son, Jose Chavez, is the only native New Mexican who ever had a seat on the New York stock exchange.

So, were established the fabulous fortunes of these Ricos of the Rio Abajo. Theirs was a family corporation, as through intermarriage practically everyone of these were closely related. However, it is the old story, and the old "cliche", using modern language, "From Levis to Levis, in three generations" again proved true.

The third generation of these Ricos, born to riches, too often fell victims to the wiles and the guiles and the vices of the American, misspent and lost their vast land holdings and inherited fortunes and today few of the descendants of the Ricos --- the Chavez's, the Armijos, the Oteros, the Gutierrez's, and the Pereas, retain their original inherited fortunes. There are a few, yes, but very few. These Ricos of the Rio Abajo were mighty men.

Again, however, the "Levis" are discarded and their present day descendants are hearkening back to the spirit of their forebearers, the 17th century Spanish Conquistador, the 18th century Spanish Dons and the 19th century Ricos of the Rio Abajo. From the Perea branch, the New Mexican may point with pride to Senator Joseph Montoya, from the Chavez branch, former United States Senator Dennis Cha-



vez, State Supreme Court Justice David Chavez, and priest, poet and historian, Fray Angelico Chavez, and others too numerous to mention in the professions and business. These sons of the conquerors were back in the stride again, not on the basis of inherited wealth, but inherited blood. Silver washes but blood remains.

## THE BLOOD OF THE CONQUERORS

One of the most remarkable New Mexicans of the 18th century was Francisco Xavier Chavez. Chavez, a descendant in direct line from Pedro Gomez Duran y Chavez, was also a member of the original 1600 Onate colony, who was born in Valverde, in the province of Galicia, Spain.

Likewise, Francisco Xavier Chavez was the direct descendant of Fernando Duran y Chavez, II, who as a 30 year old captain, fought his way out of Santa Fe with the retreating army of Governor Otermin, during the disastrous 1680 Pueblo Uprising, and remained at Guadalupe de El Paso with the fugitive New Mexico colony until the year 1693 when the New Mexicans returned in triumph under the Re-Conqueror, Don Diego de Vargas, to reclaim their homeland. Don Fernando Duran y Chavez, II, as the Royal Ensign, led the re-entry into Santa Fe.

Francisco Xaxier Chavez was the first Governor of New Mexico under Mexican rule, succeeding Facundo Melgares, the last of the Spanish Governors, in 1823. He served as Governor only a few months, being succeeded in office in 1823 by Antonio Vizcarra, a famous Indian campaigner of that day.

History records nothing which would redound to his credit or discredit as governor; likewise, little is recorded or known of his personal life as he was neither a soldier or statesman. That he accumulated a vast fortune is not what characterizes him as a remarkable person. He is remarkable in this respect; from his marriage to Ana Maria Castillo, also of Belen, were born nine children who grew to adult life, four sons and five daughters. One son, Tomas Duran y Chavez, married a niece of Archbishop Zubiria of



Chihuahua, and moved to Mexico where he became a distinguished lawyer. One of the descendants served as Governor of Chihuahua some years ago.

Excepting for Tomas, every one of the remaining eight sons and daughters of Francisco Xavier Chavez married into prominent families of the Rio Abajo, whose descendants include the most important New Mexicans of the 19th century and down even to present time. Among these many are:

Two sons who served as Governors under Mexican rule, Mariano in 1835 and Jose in 1845. Antonio Jose Chavez, a close relative, served in 1828.

Four grandsons, Colonel Francisco Perea, Colonel J. Francisco Chavez, Mariano S. Otero and Pedro Perea, served as Delegates to the American Congress. A sister, Ursula, married Antonio Sandoval, Governor in Mexican times; a daughter, Barbara, married Juan Gutierrez of Parajito. The Hubbell family of Bernalillo married into this family. Jose married Manuela Armijo, niece of Governor Manuel J. Armijo; a daughter, Juana Maria, married Juan Cristobal Armijo, nephew of Governor Manuel Armijo, and son of Juan Armijo. From this marriage stems the family of N. T. Armijo and Justo Armijo of Albuquerque and Nestor Armijo of Las Cruces. Maria Francisca Chavez married Judge Antonio Jose Otero from which family were Miguel A. Otero, Territorial Governor, and Judge Miguel A. Otero, Jr., of Santa Fe. Another sister, Merced Chavez, married Juan Otero, brother of Judge Antonio Jose Otero. Dolores Chavez married Jose Leandro Perea of Bernalillo, and Antonio Jose, who was killed by Texas bandits, as before related, married Barbara Armijo, daughter of Juan Cristobal Armijo of Albuquerque, while another daughter, Manuela Antonia, married Jose Maria Gutierrez of Bernalillo. Gutierrez was killed by Apaches just prior to American occupation, and his widow joined the Sisters of Charity as Sister Dolores. She died in Santa Fe in 1887.

Diego Antonio Duran y Chavez, like Francisco Xavier



Chavez, was a direct descendant of Fernando Duran y Chavez, II. From this family came Colonel Manuel Antonio Chavez, famous Indian fighter and Civil War leader. He was the father of New Mexico's first State Superintendent of Public Jurisdiction and distinguished attorney, Don Amado Chavez, and of Irineo Chavez, who was the official interpreter for the Court of Private Land Claims.

Through this same ancestry comes Senator Dennis Chavez; Isidora Armijo, sister of Governor Manuel Armijo, married Jesus Maria Chavez of this same ancestry; David Chavez, son of Jesus Maria Chavez, married Paz Sanchez, and among their children are Senator Dennis Chavez, who married Imelda Espinosa, sister of the writer; Judge David Chavez, Jr., of Santa Fe, Melita Chavez Jeffreys of Washington, D. C., Jesus Chavez of Santa Fe, Barbara Chavez Sena of Santa Fe, Amalia Chavez Gallegos of Albuquerque, the late Anita Chavez Tafoya of Albuquerque, and Clementina Chavez Salazar, also of Albuquerque. Senator Joseph Montoya is related to this family, the Jose Leandro Pereas.



## CHAPTER XVII

### CIVIL WAR DAYS

The final episode of the Civil War in New Mexico occurred at Peralta, around the hacienda of wartime governor, Dr. Henry Connelly, in what is known today as the Bosque Farms area. It was around this make-shift fort that the final cannon volleys were exchanged between the Union and Confederate forces. General E. R. S. Canby and his Union forces were in full pursuit of General Sibley's Confederate troops when the southerners were retreating down the Rio Grande after their disastrous defeat at Glorieta.

Governor Connelly reported that the Confederates, while in temporary possession of his hacienda, had destroyed practically everything of value about the premises, and estimated his loss at no less than \$30,000, and much of this was through pure vandalism.

Other claims were filed with the United States government for Civil War depredations. One Jesus Romero filed a claim stating that:

" . . . all his chili, corn, wheat, carpet, bed covers, ear rings, ladies breast pin, hogs, shirts, covered trunk, chinaware, 2 ovens and lard"

were taken or destroyed by the Confederate forces, to the tune of \$7,600.00.

Manuel Antonio Otero claimed \$797.00 for 247 head of sheep and F. Huning claimed 50 cents for four quarts of salt. Many farmers, while plowing their fields in recent years, have been surprised to turn up some old cannon balls, last evidence of the Civil War in New Mexico.

Governor Connelly had married the widow of former governor, Mariano Chavez, Dolores Perea de Chavez. Her son, step-son of the Governor, Colonel J. Francisco Chavez, lived at Peralta, near his step-father, for many years. Old letters have been found in the possession of relatives and



descendants of Colonel Chavez, written from Santa Fe, while he was in the Legislature, and also from Washington, when he was a delegate to Congress from New Mexico.

Governor Connelly gave a first-hand and dramatic account of this final episode of the Civil War in New Mexico in the following letter to Civil War Secretary of State Seward, dated April 20, 1862:

“Executive Department  
Santa Fe, N. Mex.  
April 20, 1862

Hon. W. H. Seward, &c.:

Sir: In my communication of the 11th instant I informed you that a junction had been made between the forces under General Canby and those under control of Colonel Paul at the place called Gallisteo, 15 miles south of Santa Fe. I have learned since that the main body of the two forces did not unite until they reached the Canon of Carnevel, directly east of and about 15 miles from Albuquerque. General Canby, having left his position on the river below Albuquerque, at which place he had a slight skirmish with a small force of the enemy, left a garrison, and taking the position to which I have referred, in the Canon of Carnavel, the two commands were united on the 13th instant.

The fugitive forces of the Texans had meantime reached Albuquerque from this place, and, uniting with the small force there, took up their line of march down the river on the east side, not being able to cross the stream at Albuquerque. They had progressed only 20 miles, when they were overtaken by General Canby at and in full possession of my residence. It being late at night when General Canby arrived within hearing of their position, his ears were saluted with the ‘sound of revelry by night.’ The violin was in full blast, ac-



accompanied by other and more noisy instruments. The enemy seemed to be entirely unconscious of his approach, nor was his presence known to them until next morning.

My residence is surrounded by quite a dense forest of trees, extending in every direction for at least half a mile, and the only approach for vehicles is by the main road. The ditches (acequias) for the purpose of irrigation, running across and parallel with the road, offer no small impediment to the operation of artillery.

During the day after General Canby had reached the position of the enemy, as related, a cannonading was carried on from both sides without any serious result. The position of the enemy was a strong one and dangerous to be approached by infantry, having high walls, made of adobes, which constitute our inclosures of farming lands. Against this position General Canby did not think prudent to make any demonstration.

During the night, however, the enemy silently left their position, and passed below a mile or two to a ford in the river, where they attempted to cross, but, their teams being weak and the river swollen by the spring floods, the whole of their train, consisting of 60 wagons, was left in the river and on the banks, the mules alone having been crossed over to the opposite shore. I am not informed that any of their artillery was either left behind or captured by our forces, with the exception of one piece the day previous, together with seven wagons and their contents.

The latest news from General Canby by Colonel Roberts, who arrived in town this evening, is that our forces were still in pursuit of the enemy, and had taken a position in advance of him at La Joya, 30 miles,



where they crossed the river, but on the east side where the enemy could not pass except under direct fire of our artillery.

Colonel Paul, with the forces from Colorado, was harassing the enemy in the rear, having crossed the river to the west side. There can be no doubt of the entire capture of the Texans, with all their train of artillery, numbering some eighteen pieces, and this closes the scene of this devastating Texan invasion.

I have the honor to remain, very respectfully,  
your obedient servant,

Henry Connelly."

(From Union Army Operations in the Southwest, by Horn and Wallace)

It is also worthy to note that the native citizens of New Mexico who lived almost 280 years under the Spanish flag and 25 years under the Mexican flag, did not waiver in their loyalty to their newly adopted United States flag, and the oath of allegiance to its support.

The late Erna Ferguson stated it so well in her review of the book on the Civil War "Union Army Operations in the Southwest," by Horn and Wallace, as follows:

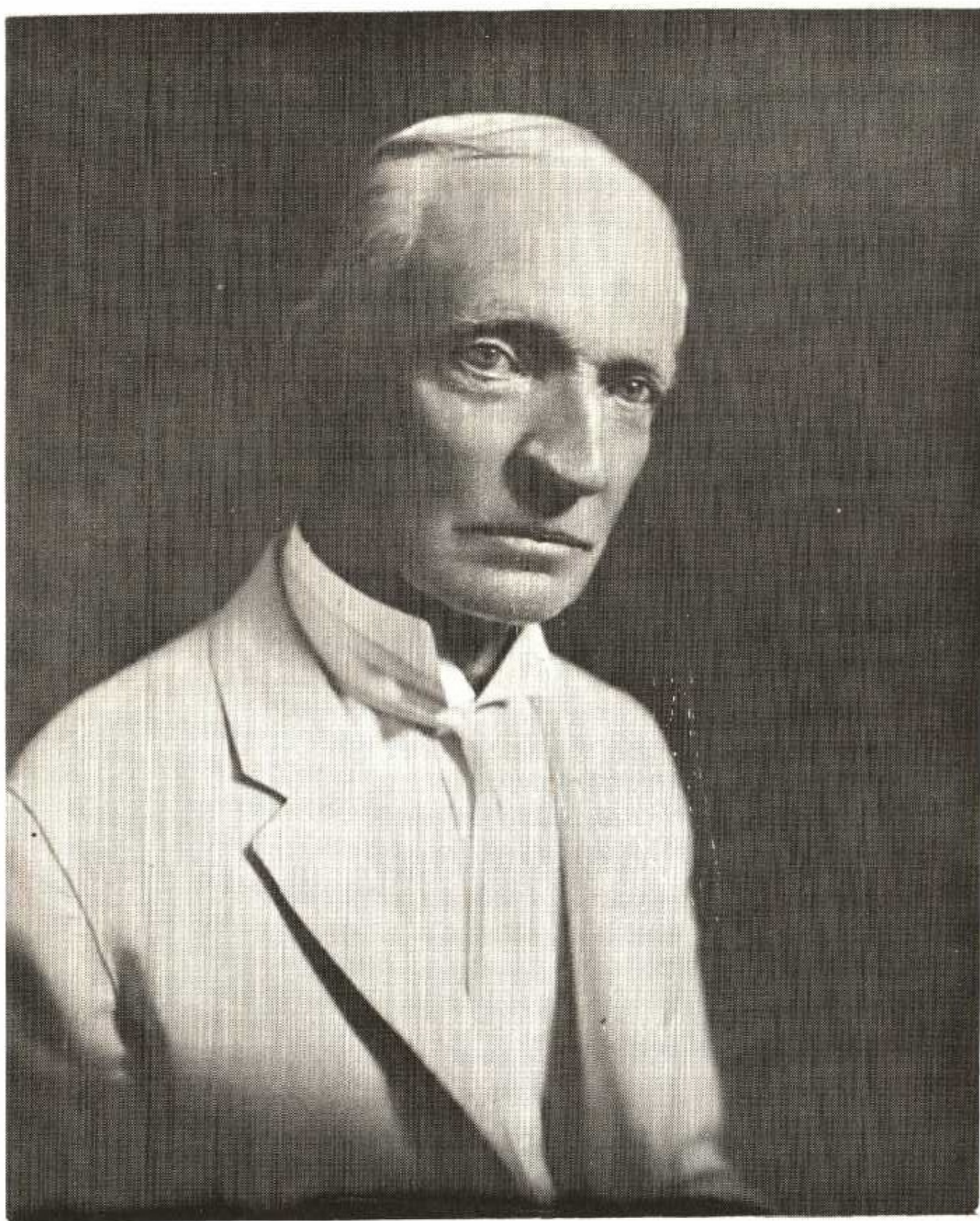
"This book seems to me a very valuable contribution to New Mexico's history. It is interesting because of the light it sheds on the little understood participation of the Spanish-speaking population in the Civil War in New Mexico, and on their patriotic devotion to their new country. When the Confederate forces invaded New Mexico in 1861, the vast majority of the state's population of 82,979 was composed of former citizens of Mexico who had been United States citizens for only fifteen years and many of whom did not speak English. Yet within two months of that invasion, 3,500



had joined the Union Army as volunteers. Many a native company was raised and commanded by an Alarid, a Vigil, a Romero, or a Montoya. Anyone familiar with local histories will be able to add other names."

Some of the descendants of Henry Connelly still reside in the Peralta area. One, Henry Connelly, of Los Lunas, is connected with that school system; he is a great-grandson of the Governor.





John Becker was a member of the Constitutional Convention from Valencia County when the Constitution was adopted in 1912.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### NEW IMMIGRATION

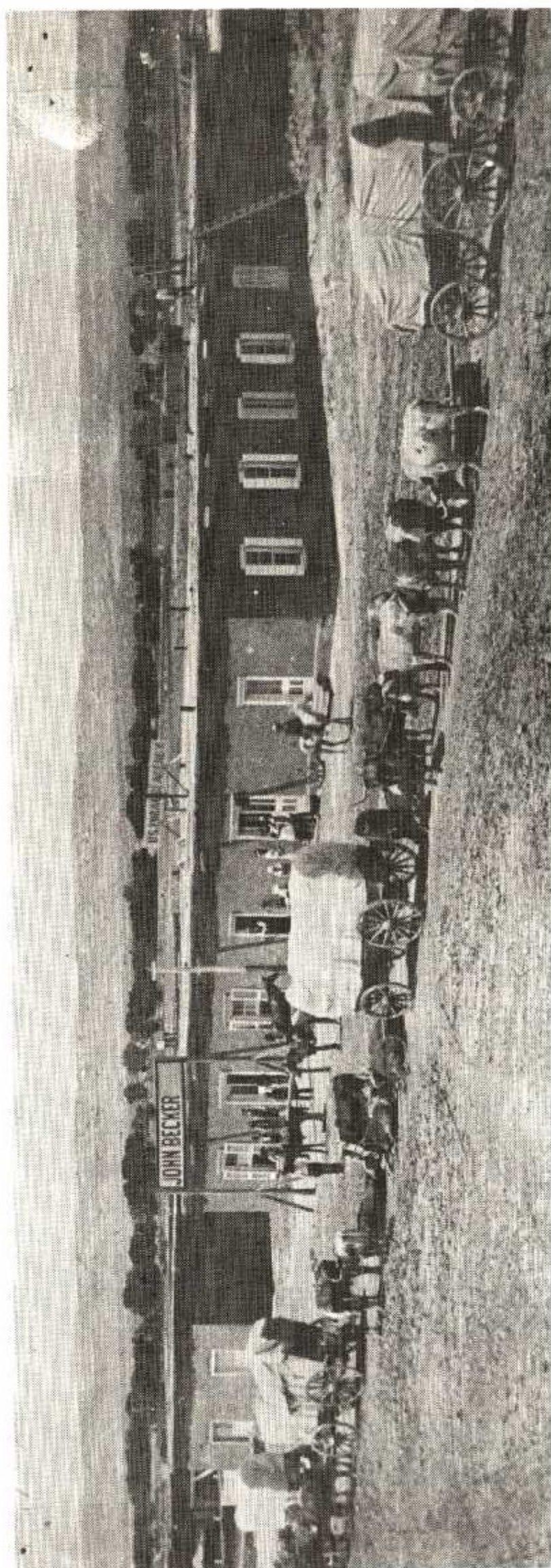
The Rio Grande Valley became known even in Europe in the late 1800's as the place of hope and opportunity for those young men in the old country who had dreams of starting a new life in the west where new lands remained to be opened. Abundant pasture for livestock and goods were flowing in and out of the territory in the rich commerce line that had been established over the Santa Fe Trail to Independence, Missouri, and the Chihuahua route to Mexico.

The stories that reached the ears of these enterprising young men across the ocean that if you could afford passage or borrow the fare to the new territory of New Mexico, you had it made.

Among the first to venture to the west and the new lands of opportunity were the Hunings, the Beckers, the Scholles, the Goebels and the Sachs. All came from across the seas to locate in Belen and actively participate in the new era in the history of this community. There were some French families to move into this area, the Didiers, Tondres, the Gilberts and others who moved further south to the Albuquerque and Bernalillo areas. Some of the immigrants from France were from the same home town as Archbishop Lamy and it is reasonable to believe that letters home from the young Archbishop inspired these new immigrants to follow soon.

These new immigrants, starting with little capital other than their determination to make good, soon acquired a comfortable status in their new homes. Some of them married local Spanish brides, while others sent back to their own countries for their sweethearts who joined them in forming a home in the new distant land of the Rio Grande Valley.





The John Becker Store, as it appeared about the year 1870. The oxen trains were common just before the coming of the railroad.



Among the newcomers was John Becker, who soon became an outstanding leader in the community. Becker was born on the 26th day of May, 1850, in the Province of Hanover, Germany, where his father, also named John, held a small government office. He received his early education in his native province and was subsequently employed for five years in a mercantile establishment where he acquired valuable knowledge on business methods and the detail of industrial enterprise.

In 1866, the province of Hanover was annexed to Prussia and, reluctant to serve in the army, young Becker elected to seek his fortune in the new frontier. He sailed for the new world, arriving in New York in the fall of 1869, soon found his way to the territory of New Mexico where he found a job awaiting him with his uncle, Louis Huning, who was already well established in the mercantile business both in Belen and in Los Lunas. Huning gave him a beginning salary of \$30 per month. He was energetic, faithful and careful and he proved his value to his employer and at the end of four months his salary was increased to \$50. Soon he was placed in charge of the Huning branch store in Belen. The Huning branch at the time was located immediately north of the store where he had a small mercantile business.

On the second day of November, 1877, Mr. Becker was united in marriage to Miss Anna Vielstitch, who was a native of Germany. They had six children of this marriage, as follows: Hans, Louie, Anna, Gustav, Lucy and Bernhart. The family were adherents of the Lutheran church to which John Becker was a liberal contributor.

John Becker conserved his resources and small salary, and with the aid of his friend, Felipe Chavez, he was able to raise enough capital to erect a small store in Belen in the year 1878. This small store kept gaining in popularity and was soon expanded to a large, modern department store, including in later years a dry goods department, grocery and hardware merchandise — a very complete line in all departments. In later years it became known as the Becker-





Modern re-enactment of a typical scene on the Santa Fe trail, on the banks of the Arkansas at Great Bend.



Dalies Company. Paul Dalies joined the firm as vice-president.

Soon after arriving in Belen, Becker realized the old mill type grinding wheel operated by water was outdated and he envisioned a modern flour mill. He was not satisfied until he erected a full roller-process flour mill operated by steam power. The mill originally had a capacity of turning out 100 barrels of flour per day. Soon Becker was buying most of the wheat in the local area to keep his mill going and his product was well received in the entire territory.

When the Constitutional Convention met in Santa Fe to form a constitution for the new state which was being admitted into the Union in 1912, John Becker was a delegate to that convention.

Felipe Chavez and John Becker were instrumental in promoting the installation of the A. T. & S. F. Railroad cut-off through Belen connecting with the coast-line and assuring the future of Belen as a community that was ready to meet the challenge of the times and its assurance of its future development.

About the turn of the century and in the early 1900's, John Becker established the First National Bank of Belen, realizing that the community required the banking facilities which were available only in Albuquerque at the time, 30 miles away. The bank continued to grow and prosper to serve the needs of the community and John Becker's son, L. C. Becker, is the present president of the First National Bank of Belen, which his father established approximately 60 years ago.

Among other prominent members of the new German Colony were Fredrick Scholle, Frederick A. Becker, a brother of John Becker, the Huning brothers, Louis, Franz and Charles. They established their mercantile business in Albuquerque and Los Lunas with a branch at Belen.

Oscar Goebel, who migrated first from Hanover, Germany, to South America, returned to his native Germany and, learning of the migration to the West, joined the caravan. Most of the young members of the new colony had



had education and training in business and had served an apprenticeship in merchandising in their native country before migrating to the new world.

Since New Mexico was bilingual, both English and Spanish, they had to learn the new languages in order to be successful in their new ventures. All of them had one thing in common — that they soon ended up in the merchandising business with small stores in the Belen area, which proved successful from the beginning. They soon expanded into the cattle and sheep industry and some of them went into the milling of grain, primarily wheat and corn, which were grown in abundance in the Valley at the time, and were the main staples of food.

Fredrick Scholle's career paralleled that of his neighbor, John Becker. Scholle first went to work for the Hunings in their new store in Belen, and after four years of association, formed a partnership, known as the Huning-Scholle Store and Livestock Dealers. Eventually, Scholle branched into his own business, established his store immediately south of the John Becker store. It was a large structure, 90 x 110 feet in dimension, and of unique architectural design, being constructed after the picturesque Swiss model.

One of the early observations of the store stated that "It was a spacious building and displayed a large extensive line of general merchandise, every department being under the immediate supervision of the able proprietor. In addition to general lines, Mr. Scholle also handles all kinds of produce." He was prominently identified with the sheep and cattle business, having at one time a flock of 15,000 sheep, besides 2,000 head of cattle.

Oscar Goebel was also first associated with the employment of the Hunings in Belen, and he soon purchased a branch store of the Huning brothers at Belen, which was located where the present Gil's Restaurant is situated today. An early observation of this business states that "the business has shown a gratifying increase in proportion each year, and Mr. Goebel now controls a representative trade extending for a radius of thirty miles in each direction. The stock carried is one of select and comprehensive order and



includes full lines of general merchandise, while produce of all kinds is also handled."

Oscar Goebel also acquired large holdings of real estate. He branched out into the cattle industry, in addition to raising fine fruits, a vineyard and the raising of various cereals and alfalfa. He raised excellent crops of wheat and oats, since this area of the valley was rich and productive, and a reliable water supply was obtained by irrigation from the Rio Grande.

Oscar Goebel married Miss Hedwig Grabau, a native of Germany. They had several children of this marriage, including Oscar, Walter, Edgar, Kurt and Herbert. The Goebels were also associated with and were members of the Lutheran church.

Some mention has also been made of the Hunings. The Huning brothers — Franz, Charles and Louis — first came to the Territory of New Mexico about the year 1860. They were also natives of Hanover, Germany. It is said that Louis Huning had approximately \$45 cash when he arrived at his new home. The brothers founded a store at Los Lunas and soon began to branch their business. The Hunings bought out the store of Jules Fruedenthal, a similar establishment at Belen, and for a time ran both establishments in their name. By 1871, the Huning brothers had six branch houses, and they handled many hundreds of thousands worth of goods. For a number of years, they had contracts from the government furnishing supplies to the amount of \$150,000 annually. In addition to their immense mercantile business, Mr. Huning and his brothers were interested in stock growing. At one time they had 60,000 head of sheep and 8,000 head of cattle, and their wool clip amounted to 200,000 pounds. In 1870 the Hunings constructed at Los Chavez one of the best full roller process flouring mills in the Territory.

Louis Huning was married in 1873 to Miss Emma Gehrling, a native of Missouri, and daughter of Dr. Gehrling of that state. His first wife died and he remarried in 1876, the second wife being Miss Henny Bush, who was a native of Bremen, Germany. The children of this union



were Emma, Fredrick, Lewie and Lolita, all born in Los Lunas.

The Gilberts and Sachs families came to Belen about the same time. Moses Sachs came to Belen about 1860. He married a native, Miss Maria Gertrudes Baca, and of this marriage the following children were born: Enrique Sachs, father of Henry Sachs, Jr., of Belen, Benedito Sachs, father of Pilar Sachs of this community, and Carolina Sachs and Louisa Sachs. Carolina Sachs married Gabino Gilbert, who was the son of Jose Manuel Gilbert and Francisquita Gilbert. Gabino Gilbert and Carolina Gilbert were the parents of Antonio Gilbert, Carlos Gilbert, Saturnino Gilbert, Martin Gilbert and several daughters.

Antonio Gilbert, the father of Horacio Gilbert, and Martin Gilbert, were soon engaged in the mercantile and livestock business in the Belen area, and were successful businessmen, Antonio Gilbert having served many years on the Board of Education of the early Belen school system. Saturnino Gilbert, the other son, moved to Albuquerque, where he likewise went into the grocery business and soon proved to be a successful businessman in Albuquerque where he raised his family. For a number of years, Saturnino Gilbert's son, Tony Gilbert, served as Albuquerque City alderman from the Third Ward.

Adolf Didier, previously mentioned, was a native of the town of Gap, France, where he was born May 23, 1864, of French parents. Didier was reared, educated and learned the wine business in his native land, and in 1888 he established a winery in Belen. It is stated by the oldtimers that Mr. Didier's wines were some of the finest in the local valley. He had his own vineyards and, in addition, purchased the finest grapes grown in the valley, from Bernalillo to Socorro. He was soon selling his products, not only in the territory, but also in Colorado and Mexico. Didier became a leader in community affairs, and was elected president of the Belen Land Grant. He served together with Paul Dalies on the first Belen School Board. He married Miss Hortence Martin, a native of France, in 1886, and they had three children, Ernest, Mercedes and Mary, all born in Belen.



## CHAPTER XIX

### BELEN —TODAY

Situated in the middle of nearly 125,000 irrigable acres lies Belen, the Hub City of New Mexico. Called the Hub City because of its central geographic location and its status as a railroad and highway center, Belen is thirty miles south of Albuquerque. Large diesel engines run through daily and jet airplanes screech across the sky. It is hard to imagine that this thriving community of 8,000 persons began as a land feared to be occupied.

Indian raids threatened continually; a man had to be a bit of a fool to attempt settlement of the Rio Grande Valley before the middle 17th century. Apaches and Comanches were a constant danger from the east and the Navajos raided from the northwest.

One revolution followed another in Mexico City; the twilight era of Spanish power in New Mexico had begun. Belen welcomed the Mexican Revolution of 1821 when Mexico declared itself independent of Spain and annexed New Mexico as a territory of a new republic.

Belen was recognized as a growing community in the early 19th century when the mission of Nuestra Senora de Belen was erected. Until this time, Belen had been a sub-mission of Isleta.

Having been under two flags, Belen was soon to have another with the beginning of the Civil War. Belen remained loyal to the Union, however, and on March 1, 1862, General Sibley of the Union forces learned that Confederates numbering 400 cavalry had reached the town of Belen. The Confederate flag was not to fly long as the Southern army was soon beaten at Apache Canyon and by July withdrew from New Mexico.

Demolished by rain and the flooding water of the Rio Grande in 1854, the Catholic mission had to be rebuilt. A



verbal battle raged between citizens of Plaza Vieja (old town) and the rising new town over the location of the new church. Plaza Vieja had the tradition of the old church and a settled community, but the vigorous new town had youth and determination. After considerable dispute, the church was built in new town. Adobe and rock bricks from the old church were used to build the first thoroughfare street.

The greatest impetus to new development was the arrival of the railroad in 1880. New markets were opened, shipping cost lessened and men now had a chance to earn a living wage. Anglo groups arrived and the first Protestant church services were held.

Belen, railroad center of the state, became a reality when the cut-off linking Amarillo and Belen was completed in 1907. The late John Becker, local tradesman, induced railroad officials to build through the town with a donation of \$8400. Now, having become a shipping center for the Rio Grande Valley, a roundhouse, an ice plant, and a handsome depot were built in the Belen yards. Population reached 1,733, an increase of 1,000 persons in ten years. In this growing, prosperous community, the First National Bank of Belen opened January 8, 1903, with a capital stock of \$25,000.

Saturnino Baca began operation of Belen's first successful newspaper, the *Hispano Americano*, in 1910 and quickly followed with a second paper, the *Belen News*, printed in English. In 1925, the two papers were merged into one bi-lingual paper. An attempt at publication had been made in 1906 by the father of the famed Damon Runyon. This paper was burned along with the courthouse in 1912.

However, 1912 saw a far more important happening: New Mexico was admitted to the Union as a state. The Indian trouble had ended and with the possibility of jobs on the railroad, Belen began to grow.

New churches were built; an American Legion Post was established for World War I veterans; Art Goebel, a Belen boy, won the Dole race to Hawaii in 1927. Goebel



held the non-stop record in 1928 and was first to land on the newly cleared Belen airstrip.

Grief descended on Belen as on the rest of the country with the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, but it became even more personal in 1942 when the island fortress of Corregidor fell to the Japanese. Many a local boy became a prisoner of war.

Belen, 1964, has traversed many miles from the once-Genizaro reservation. Serving a trade territory of 20,000 people, much of Belen's economy is still to be found in agricultural products and from the railroad. The railroad employs approximately 800 persons and has lines extending north, south, east and west with thirty to fifty-five freight trains passing through each day.

Almost one-third of the irrigable acreage of the Rio Grande Valley is located within a ten-mile radius of the Hub City. More than five dairies operate within a 25-mile radius. The main crops grown are vegetables, alfalfa, hay, sorghum grains and fruit. Belen is also the center of a great cattle and sheep raising area. A weekly livestock auction is held just north of town.

An excellent way to judge a town and its growth is through its schools. Over 800 students await admittance to a newly constructed high school. The sophomore class numbers 350, which was the total enrollment just 10 years ago. Seventy graduating seniors marched across the stage in 1954. This year, there were 186. Now, 50% of these graduates will go on to further education, which is double the percentage in 1954.

Paving now covers most of the main streets where a few years ago, only a few major streets could boast of this. Within the past five years, Belen has seen two new shopping centers open, two new bank buildings built, two overpasses constructed, five apartment buildings opened, a new medical building to serve the community, and several new industries begin operation. Southern Union Gas Co. recently opened the Manzano Meter Shop, a consolidation of El Paso and Albuquerque meter shops. This shop employs 25 persons. Radio station KARS started broadcasting October,



1961, and opened a new medium of quick communication to the people of Belen.

Forty-nine enlisted men, one officer and one small black puppy man the new Belen Radio Sites. This underground auxiliary communications system, operated by Sandia Base in Albuquerque, maintains a 24-hour alert to transmit army communications in case of attack.

Some forty-one new housing projects have sprung up over the valley in three years, 1962-63-64, the largest being the Rio Grande Estates. These projects include over 500 houses to date and include the Bosque Farms, Los Lunas and immediate Belen area.

Nearly 100 homes have been completed in the Rio Grande Estates' development east of the Rio Grande, two miles east from Belen. A nine-hole golf course, a motel, an apartment house, and a swimming pool built at the Estates have added much to the recreational facilities of the town. The second largest project, located six miles north of Belen on Highway 85, is the El Dorado Estates, with about 100 homes now occupied.

The opening of the John F. Kennedy Camp Grounds, 17 miles east of Belen in the Manzano Mountains, provides yet another recreational area for the citizens of the Belen area. Eighteen individual sites with water pumped from an 800 foot well assure the camper of a pleasant visit with Mother Nature. Big game hunting is but 20 miles away; the sportsman can try for elk, deer, and wild turkey. If he is extremely courageous, the hunter may try for a bear. Antelope are hunted in the plains country and fishing spots are quite close at hand. There are some 100 miles of planted irrigation ditches in the Belen district while mountainous areas to the northwest and southeast offer trout fishing. Elephant Butte Lake, Blue Water Lake and Conchas Dam, all within a few hours drive, offer boating, fishing, camping and water skiing.

Belen is a town in which the additional fellowship found in the many fine churches fill an integral part of the community life. The Catholic church and 13 Protestant



churches assure each individual of a place to worship according to his own beliefs.

Commercially, Belen has the usual complement of retail establishments, hotels, restaurants and theaters. It has a radio station, KARS - 860, and a semi-weekly newspaper, the News Bulletin, two banks with deposits over \$18,000,000, a growing Saving and Loan Association, three loan companies, a private hospital and other medical and dental facilities. The city's economic stability is no longer dependent on the railroad, but rather upon a wide range of industrial, agricultural and business enterprises.

Civic pride is evidenced by a keen interest and active participation in many organizations including Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Lions, Optimist Club, Pilot Service Club, Garden Club, Art League, Knights of Columbus, Eastern Star, Masonic Lodge, Knights of Pythias Lodge, Boy and Girl Scout organizations, Women's Sororities, Railroad Brotherhood Chapters and Auxiliaries, 4-H Clubs, two Future Farmers of America Chapters, three veterans organizations and a church for almost every individual need.

Of special interest to the whole state is the 2,000 acre institution known as New Mexico Boys Ranch, 20 miles south of Belen. The basic purpose of the Flying BR is to provide a home for New Mexico boys, who through no fault of their own, are hindered in normal development by unfortunate circumstances. Some fifty boys are being given a home which as nearly as possible approximates that of any child.

For those interested in historical attractions, Belen is circled by Indian pueblos, the fabulous "Golden Cities of Cibola." Ruins of the "cities that died of fear," Gran Quivira, Quarai and Abo, may be seen by a few hours drive. The still-inhabited Isleta, a pueblo of definite historical interest, is fifteen miles to the north.

Traveling west, the sightseer can relax from the demands of the 20th century by going back in time for awhile at Laguna or Acoma, the "sky city." Acoma is especially remote and retains the old structure and ways.



Many who wish the advantages of a large city yet like the relaxed atmosphere of urban or rural living, have taken up residence.

Whether you are historian, camper, hunter or seeker of the quiet, unhurried existence, Belen offers a blending of old and new. It is a place of many faces, one of which might fit you.



## CHAPTER XX

### ORIGINAL FAMILIES

How many descendants of the original 33 families petitioning for the Belen Land Grant in 1740 still live in the Belen area and the Rio Grande Valley . . . some 225 years later?

Undoubtedly, many. Because it is impossible to trace all of the descendants because of the magnitude of the task and research that would be involved; the fact that the records are not complete, some having been destroyed while other records were not kept in the first instance. Of the 33 petitioners to His Royal Majesty for a Royal Land Grant at Belen, eight of the signers carried the surname of Torres, five the surname of Salazar, and there were some Romeros, Vigils, Trujillos, Naranjos, and a Sandoval, a Jiron, a Tenorio, a Barrera, one Martiniano, and one Martin, whose given name was Francisco.

The community of Belen, in 1790, extended from Los Chavez on the north, to Sabinal on the south, with eight demarcations or distinctive settlements, all west of the Rio Grande. An official Census was taken for that year under the direction of Don Fernando de la Concha, Governor of New Mexico (1790-1794).

This Census was made up on a family basis and gives the name of each individual of the household, age, nationality or race, and occupation. Children are sometimes not listed by name, and servants seldom. The servants, usually Indians, are given by their tribal designation. Few Pueblo Indians are shown.

The demarcations listed in a translation of the original document, which is with the Archives in Santa Fe, are:

1. Los Chavez. Jose Francisco Pino, Comandante.
2. Plaza No. 1 Belen. Comandante, Diego Antonio Sanchez.



3. Plaza No. 2 Belen. Comandante, Don Miguel Baca.
4. Belen. Our Lady of Sorrows. This is the Plaza of the Genizaros. Comandante, Marcos Velasquez, a mestizo.
5. Plaza 3rd. San Antonio de los Trujillos, de Belen. Comandante, Don Santiago Trujillo.
6. Plaza de Nuestra Senora del Pilar de Belen. Comandante, Joachin Torres.
7. Plaza de Nuestra Senora de Los Jarales. Comandante, Jose Garcia.
8. Plaza de Sabinal. Belen No. 7 (Further information not legible).

The complete Census is carried in the Appendix. Here is how the family and commander are listed in the Los Chavez demarcation No. 1 Belen:

“Jose Francisco Pino. S. Rancher. 30 years of age, married to Juana Maria Baca, S, 25 years of age; a servant, C. widow, 31 years of age who has 3 single boys of the following ages, 14 years, 11 years and 8 years; a daughter 5 months, 1 Indian, female, belonging to the Apache race 6 years.”

Identical information is repeated for each family listed in the Los Chavez demarcation under numbers 713 to 729 inclusive and in each entry is shown the occupation of the men — rancher, farmer, weaver, wool carder, carpenter, sheep-herder, blacksmith, shoemaker and even a vagabond.

The spokesmen and leaders of this colony were Captain Diego de Torres and his brother-in-law, Antonio de Salazar.

In trying to trace the ancestors of these early settlers, there is a tremendous confusion created because of the similarity of names. In one census, for example, there is the name of Juan Garcia four, or five, or ten times, and it is difficult to always trace the particular family involved or the descendancy because of the similarity of names, both as far as males and females are concerned.

Nevertheless, a few representative families of this community from the earliest days of recorded history will



be traced for the purpose of conclusively establishing the historical proof of the fact that the families can be traced even today, many generations later, to some of the original families that settled in Belen or arrived here soon after the original settlement was established.

These Spanish families were in Belen prior to the founding of the United States Constitution and even prior to the Declaration of Independence of the States from Great Britain.

Captain Diego de Torres was the son of Cristobal Torres, who had been given a Spanish Land Grant near the old Pueblo of Chama. Cristobal, his father, was a soldier and in 1710 was an Alferez, residing in Albuquerque. Captain Diego de Torres, his son, was married three times. From his second marriage was born a son, Nicolas, and three other children. Nicolas Torres married Francisca Padilla, and both Nicolas and his wife, Francisca, are listed in the 1790 census of Belen, which was at the time that George Washington was President of the United States.

Nicolas, the son of Captain Diego de Torres, was living in Los Trujillos with his wife, five sons and two daughters, and an Indian female servant. They are listed as of Spanish origin and his occupation is farmer. The widow of Captain Diego, Rafaela, married Baltazar, one of the Bacas that arrived in Belen soon after the establishment of the local colony.

In the militia of Belen of 1839, which was the militia that was required to fight the constant warfare carried on by the Apaches and the Comanches, Estevan Torres is mentioned as an Infantry soldier of the Belen militia. His weapon was bow and arrow, and another member of the family, Jose Maria Torres of Sausal, north of Belen, also was a member of the militia, but he had a horse and flint-lock type gun as a weapon.

In 1856, when a dispute resulted concerning the moving of the Church from Old Town, where it had been for many years, to the west side of the community, which is its present location, the Baca family appears continuously in the petitions and other legal papers that were filed in



the resulting legal court fight. An action was filed in the Chancery in the Territorial District Court of New Mexico before Judge Kirby Benedict. In the many petitions that were filed in support of the respective claims by the litigants are noted names of many of the descendants of Diego de Torres.

About half a century later, in 1910, in reviewing the minutes of the Belen Land Grant, the following surviving members of the Torres family are listed as owners in interest of the Belen Land Grant; among others are the names of Dionisio Torres, Donasiano Torres, Gabino Torres, Juan Jose Torres y Jaramillo and Pedro F. Forres. Pedro F. Torres is the father of Valentin Torres, deputy sheriff of Valencia County. Pete Torres, Belen Fire Chief and employed by Southern Union, is also a descendant of this same family, as well as many other Torres living in the Belen area today.

Mrs. Lucy Ortega Keys of Belen is a descendant of the Torres family on the maternal side of her family.

The Salazar family apparently did not remain in Belen for a long period of time, and by 1790, the census lists only two Salazar families within the Belen Land Grant, and they were living at Sabinal, approximately ten miles south of Belen. They were Maria Leonarda Salazar, a widow, and Francisco Pablo Salazar, seventy years of age, a farmer. It is believed that many of the other families moved to Tome and the Torrance County area soon after Belen was established, and there are undoubtedly many descendants of Antonio de Salazar, one of the original colonizers, residing in this general area today.

The Castillo family were not included as grantees of the original grant. However, Juan Miguel Alvarez del Castillo was one of the witnesses attending the ceremonies when the Belen Land Grant was officially established by the Alcalde Mayor, Nicolas Duran de Chavez, in 1740. Juan Miguel Alvarez del Castillo appears as one of the attesting witnesses to the charter of the Belen Land Grant. He was married in the early part of the 18th Century to Barbara Baca, sister of Captain Baltazar Baca, the latter being one of the original members of the large Baca family that played



an important part in the early history of Belen. (See "Origin of New Mexico Families" by Fray Angelico Chavez.) There were several children of this marriage; among them were Joachin Castillo, who was born in Belen and is listed in the 1790 census as of Spanish origin, rancher, married to Anna Maria Andrea Vallejos. Several children are listed in the household, as well as an Apache servant. Maria, the daughter of Joachin and Andrea, married Francisco Xavier Chavez in 1799. Francisco Xavier Chavez was the grandfather of Felipe Chavez of Belen, "El Millionario." Thus, Juan Miguel Alvarez del Castillo was Felipe's great-grandfather on his maternal side, or the Castillo side of the family tree.

Alex Castillo of Belen, former principal of the Jarales school, is a direct descendant of Juan Miguel Alvarez del Castillo. Alex is the son of Jose Felipe Castillo, who was the son of Francisco Castillo, the son of Antonio Jose Castillo, who was the son of Joachin Castillo, being in turn the son of Juan Miguel Alvarez del Castillo. Thus, Alex Castillo is the sixth generation removed from the original Castillo family recorded in the early history of Belen. Juan Miguel Alvarez del Castillo was residing in a settlement called San Clemente, which was immediately north of Belen.

A criminal action was filed in the year 1747 against two Genizaro Indians from the Belen area, who were charged with stealing buffalo hides, tanned hides and other merchandise from the home of Juan Miguel Alvarez del Castillo. A complete record of this criminal case may be found in the Spanish Archives of New Mexico, No. 480. It is charged in the criminal complaint that the Genizaro Indian known as "El Cuajo" and another Indian known as "Antonio el Pelon", both from the Town of Belen, stole in the night time said merchandise, by breaking into the home of Juan Miguel del Castillo. A complete record was made of the proceedings, the manner in which the Indians were arrested and later incarcerated at Isleta. The entire proceedings was brought to the attention of Governor Joachin Codallos y Rabal, Governor of the Kingdom of New Mexico. All of the preliminary procedure was carried on



before the local Alcalde Joseph Baca, who was also called a Juez Receptor. The case was finally disposed of by sentencing the two Genizaros for the crime to what is termed as the "Prision del Yndio," or the Indian Prison. The complaint states that the robbery took place on Christmas Eve, 24th of December, 1740, and the robbers tore off the lock hasps from the door. "Los Indios entraron por la sala de la casa de Don Juan Miguel y arrancando las armillas del canada, se entraron adentro."

## BACA

The Baca family came on the scene in Belen about the same time as the Garcias. In 1767, Baltazar Baca joined Toribio Garcia in protecting the threatened encroaching into the Belen Grant by Fernando Duran y Chavez.

The Bacas were living in "Plaza de Los Bacas", which was the second Plaza of Belen, as set out in the 1790 Census of Belen. It was later referred to as "El Karanklan" (those dressed in calico), a nickname given the Baca family by the local neighbors, apparently referred to the clothing they wore, which was calico.

The Baca Plaza is referred to in Spanish Archives No. 1175, which sets forth the proceedings of disobedience directed against some of the inhabitants of Belen, accused of disobeying the Governor's orders in the construction of a bridge at the Rio Grande at San Felipe, which has been referred to earlier. The Garcia plaza is referred to in this same Archives document, as well as the Genizaro Plaza and the Sausal area, which was immediately north of Belen and on the west bank of the Rio Grande.

Baltazar Baca was the son of Bernabe Jorge Baca, to which De Vargas granted the Pueblo Viejo at La Cienega, in 1701. On May 28, 1718, he married Margarita Baca. He was Alcalde Mayor of Acoma and Laguna in the third decade of the 18th century and was very unpopular with the Indians and the Missionaries. His son, Baltazar Baca, was as unpopular as his father when he later served as Alcalde Mayor of Laguna. Baltazar Baca married Manuela Rael de



Aguilar on July 17, 1738. They had six children, among whom was Miguel Emeregildo. After his first wife's death, Baltazar married his second cousin, Rafaela Baca, the widow of Captain Diego de Torres. (Origin of N. M. Families - Chavez).

Baltazar Baca was also one of the witnesses to the land grant document in 1739, as well as Francisco Padilla, who was one of the forefathers of the Padilla families that also settled the Belen area in very early days.

In 1791, Miguel Baca is listed as "Teniente Interno del partido de Belen." (Acting Lieutenant in charge of the Town of Belen).

Bartolome Baca, as Alcalde of Belen and Tome, in 1814, wrote to Acting Governor Ysydro Rey, reporting that due to illness he was unable to carry out his duties as Alcalde, and official orders he had received. He requested the appointment of someone to relieve him of his duties. (Spanish Archives N. M. 1226)

The first Juez de Paz (Justice of the Peace), listed for Belen is Juan Cruz Baca. In 1839, as Justice of the Peace of Belen, he transmitted a roster of the Belen militia, comprising the surrounding area, Plaza de Sausal, Jarales and Los Chavez, to the Governor at Santa Fe. This was the Belen militia that was still maintained to fight the hostile Indians, (the Gentiles), as they were called, when New Mexico was under the Mexican flag, and just prior to the Civil War. The militia includes a total of six mounted horsemen, 115 infantry, twenty guns (flint-lock type). 100 of the militia-men were armed with bow and arrow.

During the stormy and bitter fight to move the Catholic church to Baca Town (El Karanklan), previously told about, from Old Town to Baca Town, one of the leading sponsors of the move was Patricio Baca, and his son, Jose Maria Baca. Both were named as parties to the legal proceedings filed in the District Court, in Chancery, in the year 1865. Patricio Baca was the father of Jose Maria Baca, who in turn had a son, Damian Baca. This Damian Baca was the father of Jose Maria Baca, living in Belen today, who served as justice of the peace and police judge of the



town of Belen, and also operated a restaurant for several years on First Street. Patricio Baca is the great-grandfather of Bernard Baca, who is on the administrative staff of the Belen schools.

The genealogy of the Baca family covers most of the Baca families residing in Belen today.

In tracing the genealogy of Casimira Baca, a teacher in the Belen school system, it is noted that her family is easily traced back to the 1790 census of Belen. Her father was the late Elias Baca and her mother Isabel Valencia de Baca. The father of Elias was Marcos Baca y Castillo, whose father was Vicente Baca. Vicente's father was Juan Jose Baca who was living in the Second Plaza, also known as the Plaza de los Bacas, according to the 1790 census. He was engaged in the livestock business, was 25 years of age and married to Marta Chavez. The wife of Vicente Baca y Chavez was Juana Maria Castillo y Vallejos. The parents of Juana Maria Castillo were Joachin Castillo and Anna Maria Andrea Vallejos. The latter two names also appear in the 1790 census and both living in the Plaza de los Bacas. They had two daughters, in addition to various Indian servants, living in their household.

On her mother's side, Casimira Baca was a descendant of the Valencia family. Juan Domingo Valencia was a prominent member of the Valencia family who lived generally in the Old Town area. Juan Domingo Valencia was one of the leaders in the group to retain the church in Old Town in 1855. He appears as the Plaintiff in the action that was filed in Federal Court to restrain the moving of the church, but the Court, after hearings, permitted the change of location to where Archbishop Lamy and other members of the Baca family wanted at the west end of town, particularly since the river was causing considerable damage to the Old Town area and it would be a short time before the old church was completely demolished by the flooding waters of the Rio Grande.

Saturnino Baca was one of the more prominent members of the Baca family in the late 80's and the early 1900's. He was an early advocate of education and better schools



in the county. He served as County Superintendent of Valencia County for many years, and was known as a progressive and able educator. He was the father of Elfego Baca, former sheriff and chief of police of the Town of Belen.

Mr. Baca was also in the newspaper business, the founder of *El Hispano Americano*, an early Spanish newspaper which later became known as the *Belen News*, and eventually the *News-Bulletin* of today.

## GARCIA

The Garcias were not living in Belen proper in 1740. Nevertheless, some of the members of the Garcia families were living in Albuquerque and Bernalillo areas prior to this date. The Garcias, who eventually drifted into Belen, were descendants of Jose Garcia Jurado, who was a native of Mexico City, the son of Fernando, and forty years old when he joined the 1693 colonists with his family. His family came with the De Vargas reconquest.

Jose Garcia Jurado soon had differences with Governor Val Verde, and in 1702 he was in Mexico City representing the Council of Santa Fe against Val Verde's confirmation as governor.

Ramon Garcia Jurado carried on his father's feud in his differences with the Governor. He married Antonia de Espinosa.

(Chavez in his "Origin of New Mexico Families" lists the surname as Espinola — He is incorrect — there was no Espinola family ever in New Mexico The Archives definitely show Espinosa — See Twitchell also. Chavez mistook the spelling of this name — Espinosa. One of the co-authors of this work assumes responsibility for this correction.)

After his first wife's death, Ramon married Bernadina Hurtado at Albuquerque in 1710. He was Alferez Real in the Moqui campaign in 1716. As Alcalde of Bernalillo and nearby pueblos in 1732, he was accused by the Padres and



others of mistreating the Indians. On August 5, 1709, he carved his name on Inscription Rock while on the way to Zuni. He died on April 6, 1760, at the age of 80. Among the children by his second wife were Toribio Garcia, who married Brijida Vallejos in 1766. Apparently soon after his marriage, Toribio and his young bride moved to Belen. In that same year, a petition was made by certain residents of Belen, including Toribio Garcia, Baltazar Baca and others, including members of the Torres family, directed to Governor Pedro Fermin de Mendinueta. The petition stated that Pedro Yturbieta had sold his interest as an heir and owner in common of the Belen Land Grant for \$200.00 to Fernando Duran y Chavez, the latter being the son of Nicolas Duran y Chabes. Toribio Garcia and other signers of the petition stated that they had their ranches and livestock and lambing grounds, and that Fernando Chavez, who owned an hacienda nearby (undoubtedly he refers to the Nicolas Duran de Chavez Grant), was now encroaching upon their lands. Governor Mendinueta solved the thorny problem by resolving that any owner in common of the Belen Land Grant must give public notice of his intention to sell his interest. If the remaining owners in interest did not desire to purchase, then the said owner in common could sell his share in the Grant to an outsider; that since no public notice had been given of this proposed sale to Fernando Chavez, the Governor held the sale was void and of no effect, and that the \$200.00 paid by Fernando must be returned to him. In doing so, equity would be given to all parties.

Toribio Garcia next appears on the 1790 census of Belen. His wife is listed as Brijida Vallejos, both Espanoles. Toribio is 59 years of age and his wife 60. His trade is given as a weaver, and they have an Indin servant in their household. His married son, Xavier Garcia, age 34, is listed as married to Josefa Sanchez; Estevan Garcia, age 36, married to Teresa Sanchez, and Pablo Garcia, 38, married to Miquela Baca. All three sons are engaged in the livestock business and live in the Plaza de Nuestra Senora del Pilar de Belen, which is the fifth plaza of Belen. It is also rec-



ognized as the Plaza de Los Garcias because of the prominent Garcias living in this area; also known as Los Pueblitos and located immediately in the south edge of Belen.

The authors have been able to establish the descendants of the Garcia family, and particularly of Toribio Garcia, with the assistance of Juan Garcia, father of Rosendo Garcia of Belen, who is a descendant of this pioneer family. At the present time, he lives south of Belen on the lands where his forefathers farmed and tended flocks many years ago in the early days of Belen.

As related heretofore, the son of Toribio was Pablo, who appears in the 1790 census. Jose was the son of Pablo, and he in turn had a son named Pablo. It is this last mentioned Pablo who was the father of Andres, Luz and Jose Garcia, all of Belen. All of these last mentioned Garcias were born and lived most of their lives in Los Pueblitos of Belen. The father of Estanislado Garcia was Andres Garcia, Estanislado being the father of Salo Garcia, a local businessman of Belen today.

Following the genealogy listed above, Salo Garcia's children are nine generations removed from the original Garcia, Jose Garcia Jurado.

## CHAVEZ

The founder of the Chavez family in New Mexico was Pedro Duran y Chavez, who came with reinforcements which joined the original Onate colony at San Gabriel, on Christmas Eve, 1600. He was listed simply as Pedro Gomez y Duran, and did not remain long in New Mexico. Returning to New Spain eight years later with Pedro de Peralta, the Governor who replaced Onate, again we find him in New Mexico, this time listed as Pedro Gomez Duran y Chavez.

Duran y Chavez married Isabel Bojorquez, related to the original colonizing families. He remained in New Mexico to establish the distinguished family which bears his name.

Pedro Duran y Chavez died prior to the 1680 Pueblo



Rebellion. Not all of his descendants returned with the reconquest. Don Fernando Duran y Chavez, one of the high officers of the Reconqueror, De Vargas, did return and continued the Chavez family in New Mexico. He was a grandson of Pedro Duran y Chavez, the original Onate colonist.

A complete genealogy of the Chavez family is included in the Appendix to this work.

## SANCHEZ

The Sanchez family included Pedro Sanchez, among others, a soldier with the Coronado Expedition of 1540. Among the original settlers of San Gabriel, the first Spanish capitol, were several colonists bearing the surname, Sanchez.

In the early history of the Rio Abajo, was Cristoval Sanchez as alcalde mayor of the Albuquerque alcaidia, in the year 1767. The alcaidia included the Belen and Tome area and all of the Rio Abajo for the purpose of civil as well as minor criminal matters which were administered by the alcalde mayor. Many documents have been discovered in the archives bearing the history of Juan Cristoval Sanchez as alcalde mayor. Some of these documents were executed in Belen and some in the Tome area.

The 1790 census of Belen listed Don Diego Sanchez, Espanol, as comandante of Plaza No. 1 of Belen. He is listed as engaged in the livestock industry. His wife was Ana Maria Albarez del Castillo, daughter of Miguel Albarez del Castillo, of the original Castillo family of the Rio Abajo. The grandfather of Diego was Jacinto Sanchez de Inigo, one of the settlers here before the 1680 Indian Revolt of New Mexico, who returned with the De Vargas reconquest army (see Original Families of New Mexico by Fray Angelico Chavez). On his return with the reconquest expedition, Jacinto settled in the Rio Abajo area with his son, Francisco. Many of the Sanchezes in the Belen area are descendants of this branch of the family. However, the heart of the Sanchez colony was located in the Los Chavez and Sausal areas north of Belen proper. The Sausal and the Los



Chavez communities are both identified as well established communities in the 1775 official map of the Province of New Mexico prepared by Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, distinguished soldier of the Royal Garrison in Santa Fe.

The Los Chavez 1790 census included several Sanchezes, among them Pedro Sanchez, Jose Sanchez, both tejedores y espanoles, (Spanish and weavers by profession), and Gertrudis Sanches, a widow.

The 1839 official militia of New Mexico lists three adult members of the Sanchez family: Jose Maria Sanchez, armed with bow and arrow; Jose Rafael Sanchez, armed with escopeta and with horse; and Juan Jose Sanchez, escopeta mounted.

It is not unusual in the early census of New Mexico to find most of the males baptized with one of the names, Jose, and the girls, Maria, in honor of St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary.

A document dated December 13, 1879, from the Sausal area, recently discovered, tells about a meeting held by the local residents of Sausal to consider changing the name of the community. However, after considerable deliberation, open discussion and hearing the pros and cons, it was determined by the majority vote of those attending the meeting to retain the name, Sausal, which had already existed for 150 years at that time. The president of the meeting was Jose Prudencio Sanchez, the son of Juan Jose Sanchez, listed in the early militia. Jose Prudencio was the father of Lucas Sanchez of Sausal, who was engaged in the early days of his life with his father, Jose, as a trader on the Santa Fe Trail, as well as the Colorado trade. Among the children of Lucas are Alberto Sanchez of Belen and Fidela Gilbert Sanchez.

Olivia Sanchez has made available to the authors a most revealing and interesting letter written by Don Prudencio Sanchez and his wife, Maria Manuela Baca, of Sausal, dated January 28, 1879, and directed to Senor Don Jose Manuel Gilbert and his senora, Dona Francisquita Trujillo, requesting the hand of their daughter, Lugardita Gilbert in matrimony on behalf of their son, Lucas Sanchez,



a young, eligible bachelor. The letter is reprinted herein because of its historical as well as cultural value.

Belen, N. M.  
Sausal  
January 28, 1879

Senor Don Jose Manuel Gilbert and  
his Senora, Dona Francisquita Castillo  
Belen, New Mexico

My most respectful couple,

With all consideration and appreciation after greeting you in the name of our family, I find myself pleading a just cause and do so by submitting myself humbly to your feet without any other object than to inform you that which by word of mouth would be very difficult since the subject is a very delicate matter in relation to the circumstances at hand.

Begging your forgiveness for this imposition we proceed to the subject matter. The Divine Providence brings to its children, good and bad, happiness and tribulations, and we are resigned to receive our lot. I, therefore, address myself to you to manifest that in order to better serve our Lord, my son, Lucas Sanchez, and humble servant, has manifested to me that since he desires to enter the holy sacrament of marriage he has directed himself to the very honorable and virtuous daughter of yours, Dona Lugardita Gilbert, and by the same reason, if your daughter accepts our decision to us, it meets all the requirements of honor and virtue that a father desires for his son.

We have taken it upon ourselves to ask the patriarch Saint Joseph to intercede for us and our Blessed and Holy Mother Mary that through this media our solicitation will be answered, always ready to abide



by His Holy Will.

We beg to remain always most considerate of your well being.

Q. B. S. M.  
(Who kisses your hand)

Jose Prudencio Sanchez  
Maria Manuela Baca  
Bosque, Sausal

(Father and mother of Maria Manuela Baca were Jose Patricio Baca and Maria Concepcion Arteaga.)

A dinner was usually arranged in due course of time at the home of the prospective bride at which solemn occasion the answer would be given. If the the answer was yes, the announcement was made at the dinner. However, if the family of the bride did not approve of the marriage and the answer was no, nothing was said to offend the prospective bridegroom or his parents, but in accordance with the custom, the matter was most diplomatically handled by serving calabasas (squash) as one of the dishes at the dinner. Nothing more need be said. The bridegroom's parents then have to look elsewhere in hope of a squashless dinner.

### SEDILLO

The Sedillo family can be easily traced to the area of the reconquest of New Mexico immediately after the Indian Revolt.

Pedro Cedillo, Rico de Rojas, was one of the devout members of the Confraternity of La Conquistadora. His son, Joaquin Cedillo, Rico de Rojas, a native of New Mexico, married Maria Barela in Santa Fe. Soon thereafter, they moved to the Rio Abajo and reared a large family in the Joaquin Cedillo Land Grant.

The Cedillo Land Grant was located between the Pu-



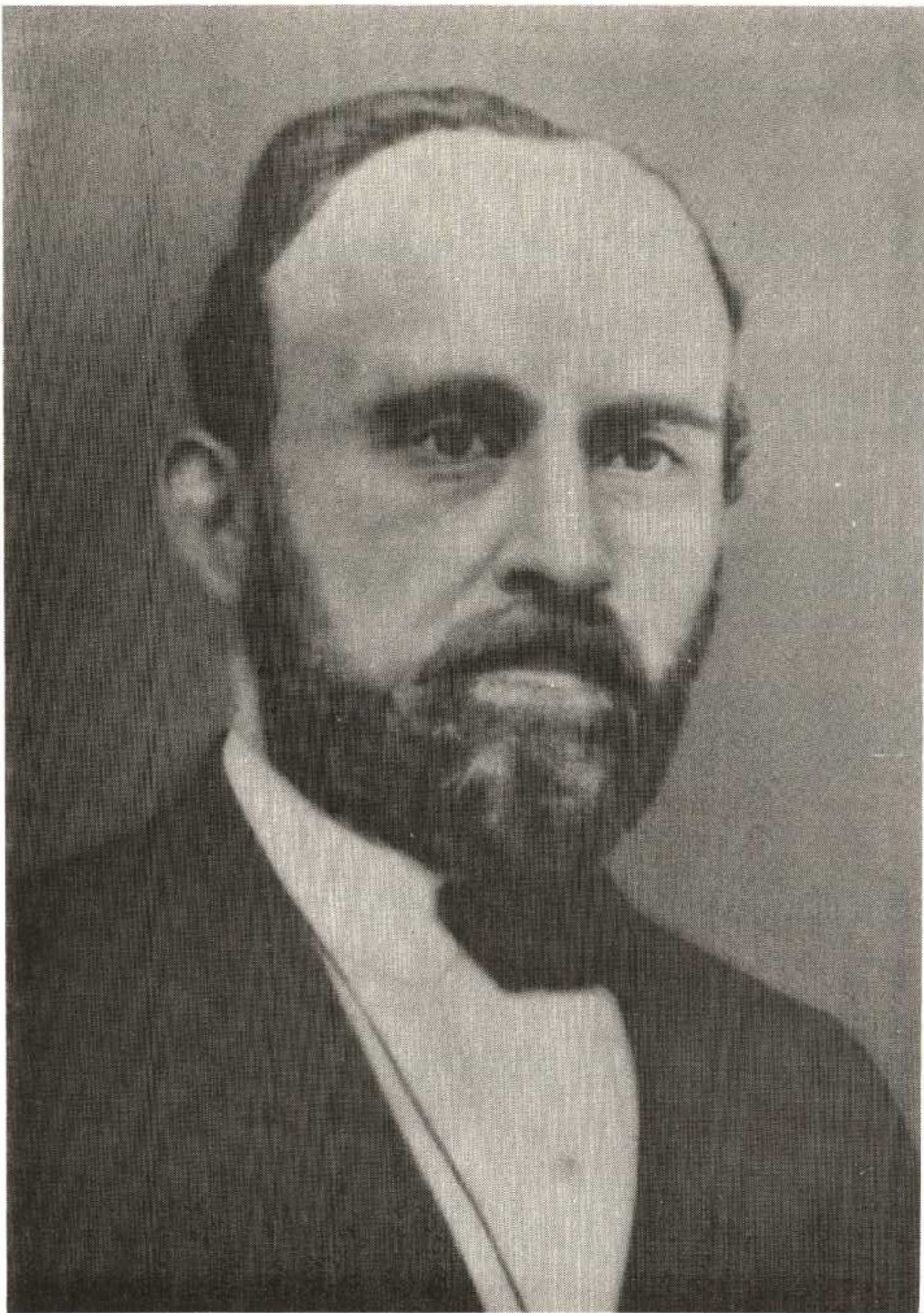
eblo of Isleta on the north and the old Pueblo of San Clemente on the south, in the vicinity of present Los Lunas. This land grant was later acquired by the prominent Gutierrez family in the latter part of the 18th Century.

Antonio Sedillo, (apparently the spelling was changed about this time, dropping the C and adding an S in the surname) the son of Joaquin, lived in the Fourth Plaza de Atrisco, and is listed in the 1790 Census of the Albuquerque area. Antonio Sedillo was the Comandante of the Fourth Plaza. He is listed as of Spanish descent, a farmer, 42 years of age and married to Antonia Baca, also of Spanish descent. They had six sons and a servant, a Genizaro, living in their home.

Antonio Sedillo acquired the Sedillo Land Grant, a Spanish Land Grant, which was also known as the Canada de Apaches, in the year 1769. The land grant contained approximately 88,000 acres and extended from the Sandia Mountains to the Rio Puerco.

Filo Sedillo, Belen attorney, is six generations removed from the original grantee of the Antonio Sedillo Land Grant. Many of the Sedillos in the Rio Abajo are descendants of this same family.





Don Felipe Chavez  
"El Millionario"

As an enterprising young man. He was a prominent trader on the Santa Fe Trail, had an interest in the silver mines of Chihuahua and a stockbroker in New York to handle his stock transactions.



## CHAPTER XXI

### EL MILLONARIO

To be a millonario in the frontier of New Mexico in the 19th century was quite an accomplishment.

And to achieve this reputation from a tiny trading spot on the Rio Grande was even more remarkable.

Whether legend or truth, Felipe Chavez became known as "El Millonario" during his lifetime, which began about 1835 and ended April 11, 1905.

A pioneer merchant, Felipe Chavez was also a successful rancher, a trader, an influential politician (a Democrat) and a philanthropist. His business interests extended to the New York Stock Market and to mining in Old Mexico.

The story goes that Felipe used the plazuela of his adobe mansion in Belen to sun his gold and silver twice a year, to prevent the rust from setting in. Old timers recall there used to be huge piles of silver and gold sunning in the Chavez plaza. There was no log cabin background to his life. Literally speaking, it might be said that Felipe Chavez was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and during his lifetime he replaced it with a gold spoon.

He was a descendant of one of the most powerful and distinguished New Mexican families of the day, both on his father's and mother's lineage.

There were many Felipe Chavezes in the Belen area about 1860, but there was only one Felipe Chavez referred to as "El Millonario." Whenever there was any doubt as to which Felipe Chavez they were talking about, it could always be clarified by letting it be known that he was "The" Felipe Chavez.

Contemporary business associates, all prominent in the 19th century history of Belen, included the Hunings, John Becker, Fred Scholle, Vicente Baca and later Paul B. Dalies.

The story of "The" Felipe Chavez began in 1835, in





Felipe Chavez as he appeared in later life. He used to sit and rock in his favorite rocking chair in the portal of his home at Belen.



Los Padillas, south of Albuquerque. His father was Jose Chavez y Castillo, governor of New Mexico in 1845. His uncle, Mariano Chavez, was the father of Colonel J. Francisco Chavez. The latter was promoted to the rank of colonel by President Lincoln during the Civil War. Felipe's mother was Manuela Armijo de Chavez, a descendant of the illustrious Armijo family and a cousin of Governor Manuel Armijo, the last Mexican governor of New Mexico.

This may sound like a "Who's Who" in New Mexico history, but a distinguished family tree it is. It includes Francisco Xavier Chavez, his grandfather, who was the first native to serve as Governor of this state. He served under the Mexican flag in 1822.

Jose Chavez y Vallejos, a cousin of Felipe Chavez, was the grandfather of the late Ignacio Chavez of Belen.

Jose Chavez y Vallejos and Maria Luisa Baca Chavez, his wife, had three children, Feliciano, the oldest, who died as a young man in Chihuahua, where he had been sent for his education; Rodrigo, who married Francisca Castillo of Belen, was the father of Ignacio Chavez. Rodrigo died in the late 1800's. Eutemia, the third child, married Nicolas Sanchez of Jarales and they had ten children of this marriage. Olivia Sanchez and her sister, Carmel Norris, of Belen, are the granddaughters of Eutemia Chavez y Sanchez.

Jose Sanchez of Jarales is one of the surviving children of Eutemia.

Manuel Baca and Josefa Baca conveyed a certain tract of land to Jose Chavez y Vallejos and Luisa Baca, their son-in-law and daughter, in 1854. This land was later conveyed by Jose Chavez y Vallejos and Maria Luisa Chavez to Felipe Chavez in the year 1886, for the consideration of \$1,000. This land now forms much of the land included in the Central Townsite Company's Addition to the Town of Belen. The Central Townsite Company was incorporated in 1937 by Edmundo C. de Baca, a nephew of Felipe Chavez, and Reuben Perry, a retired school teacher from Albuquerque.

A flood of the Rio Grande caused Felipe Chavez and his young bride, the former Josefa Chavez, about the year 1860, to move from Padillas in Bernalillo County, to Be-





Old residence of Felipe Chavez as it looks today. The home is located in the central part of Belen and is now used as the Chadwick Apartments.



Remaining adobe wall of the old Felipe Chavez residence which served to enclose the back of the house as a plazuela.



len. In one sense, Felipe was returning home after many years of absence. His grandfather, Francisco Xavier Chavez, and his grandmother, Ana Maria Castillo, were both born in Belen.

The Rio Grande had overflowed in the Los Padillas area, causing considerable damage and destruction to the homes and farms in this area, only 20 miles north of Belen. His bride, Josefa, was a daughter of Jose David Chavez and Barbara Armijo, a sister of Felipe's mother. They were double first cousins, and the performance of the marriage required a special Church dispensation, in view of the prohibition against marriage by first cousins.

After moving to Belen, Felipe lost no time in launching a phenomenal business career. He first founded a general merchandise store, locating immediately west of what is now Belen's North Main Street, (El Camino Real — The King's Highway) a route generally followed by traders and stage coach lines. El Camino Real was a contemporary Santa Fe Trail between Santa Fe and Chihuahua, Mexico.

Felipe established his first store in the adobe building later occupied for many years by the Carl Halama department store and subsequently by an auto parts store and auto body shop, both a far cry from its original use as a shopping center which received its merchandise from mule and ox drawn transport.

The young merchant first established one large store, a two-story building, an adjoining place for his stage coach, wagons and other equipment, and immediately to the west, he built his patio-enclosed adobe mansion. That home still stands today, with its enclosed plaza, popularly known today as the Chadwick apartments.

A natural leader, young Felipe soon attained respect as a man of sound judgment. He became an advisor in the local area. Probably because he was a Democrat, politically speaking, he soon locked horns with the prominent Republican family, the Lunas — Solomon, Jesus Maria and Tranquilino.

Felipe expanded his business interests early, also engaging in cattle and sheep ranching. This was done, how-



ever, mostly on an "el partido" basis. The "partido" agreement was the Spanish form of doing business by having the owner farm out to ranchers his cattle, sheep and other livestock, receiving back the original herd, less any normal attrition, together with one-half of the increase as dividend.

Family connections apparently drew the youthful Belen merchant into trading operations along the Santa Fe Trail. Jose Chavez, his father and Antonio Jose Chavez, an uncle, were among the pioneers in the early Santa Fe trade. They were both considered excellent merchants, good traders and respectable gentlemen in their field of endeavor.

The older Chavez brothers had their own mule trains, hauling merchandise over the Santa Fe Trail, and Felipe was soon deeply involved in sending and receiving merchandise over the Trail from merchants in Leavenworth, Kansas, Kansas City, St. Louis and all sources of supply to the West.

From the New Mexico end of the trail, they would ship hides, furs and other products which came in from the south, on the Chihuahua (El Camino Real) Trail.

Before long, Felipe extended his commercial activities to New York City, where he engaged, through an agent, in the purchase and sale of stocks, real estate and most everything as long as it was a legitimate trade. His personal papers reflect a series of accounting by his agent over the years on his many commercial activities from New York City.

While the general Belen area was progressing and developing, and investments in New York proved profitable, Felipe continued to increase and improve his trade over the Santa Fe Trail. He hired one Antonio Castillo, of the Castillo family of Belen, to serve as the wagon master of his mule trains, with authority over all his trading operations on the Trail.

The mule trains returning from the States were loaded with sugar, coffee, calico, gingham, velvet, poplin, all in rolls of cloth; also white bleached cloth, or "manta", one of the main staples for homemade shirts, pants and other



homemade clothing. In these trains could also be found stores of cosmetics, ladies' jewelry and candles for the many religious services.

Since no machinery was supplied in this area at the time, all of the simple items for farming, such as plows, hand tools, items of hardware, nails and the like were all hauled in over the Santa Fe Trail. Also listed in the bills of lading, as revealed by the personal papers of Felipe Chavez, was one which was typical of the many items of merchandise carried in the wagon trains. This bill was from Chick Brown, Kit Carson, Merchants, dated April 25, 1872. Other merchants from whom purchases were made about the same time included Kearney and Bernard, Westport, Mo.; C. R. Morehead & Co., Leavenworth, Kansas; A and P Shannon, Kansas City, Mo.; R. Ridlebarger & Co., Kansas City, Mo.; and Glasgow Bros., St. Louis.

Felipe's credit was well established when he stepped into the business of hauling merchandise over the Santa Fe Trail. Most of these merchants had previously done business with his father, Jose Chavez, and his uncle, Antonio Jose Chavez.

The trading with supply sources to the Northeast was not without hazards. The Santa Fe Trail was full of frontier tribes that would attack the wagon trains periodically.

A first cousin, the famous Col. Francisco Chavez, described one of the Indian attacks on the wagon trains near Arroyo de la Baca in a letter to Don Felipe, dated June 11, 1866.

"An intense battle began at eight in the morning and raged for three hours, through 11 o'clock. The Indians made off with their mules after overpowering the wagon train.' Colonel Chavez complained that the Indians were so inhuman as not to spare him one mule for a saddle. And the Colonel was most unhappy that the Army escort provided for the wagon trains in the most dangerous part of the route refused to fight for the wagon train. This left the tough battle up to Colonel Chavez a few Mexicans attached to the train. He praised the latter for their valiant defense efforts.



Don Felipe was consulted about the advisability of getting additional mules or oxen to haul the cargo to market, or sell the merchandise at the best obtainable price, on the spot.

Adventure and tragedy were ever present on the Santa Fe Trail. Felipe's uncle, Antonio Jose Chavez, was murdered by a gang of Texas outlaws, while transporting approximately \$20,000 in gold dust. How the Texans learned of the gold transport is not revealed, but the gang held up the wagon train at Chavez Creek, in Kansas, in the 1840's, and killed Chavez and all the members of his wagon train.

Don Felipe retained a distinguished law firm, Watts & Son of Santa Fe, to investigate and bring the desperados to justice. Judge Watts had served as chief justice of the Supreme Court of New Mexico. Judge Watts subsequently wrote to Felipe that the desperados were captured, brought to trial, and sentenced to hang. Among the leaders were a McDonald and a Brown. The letter indicated that part of the lost loot was recovered and returned to the heirs of Antonio Jose Chavez.

During the Civil War, in 1862, just two years after Don Felipe moved to Belen, a Confederate Army unit passed through Belen after routing the Union forces at Val Verde, south of Socorro. The commander, Brig. Gen. H. H. Sibley, demanded \$5,000 of Don Felipe, plus a considerable order of livestock; mainly sheep and cattle, to feed his hungry troops. "I. O. U.'s" were given Felipe, signed by General Sibley, which requests were verified in the Chavez records.

A few years after Don Felipe had founded his business operations in Belen, a young man named John Becker arrived from Germany to seek his fortune in the West. This was about 1871. Becker was first associated with the Huning Bros., founders of the Huning Merchandising business located in Los Lunas. In the early days, they had a store in Belen in the general area of where Gil's Bakery is located today, at North Main Street and Reinken Avenue, and this was the store which John Becker first managed for the Hunings.

Don Felipe was impressed by this enterprising young



man full of vigor (John Becker). He provided some financing and soon thereafter, John Becker began his own mercantile business.

With all these activities, Don Felipe still had time to continue to develop his New York investments. He had an agent in New York by the name of P. Harmonys, Nephew & Co. This firm managed his real estate properties in New York, consisting of both residential and commercial buildings; and also kept his stocks moving, selling when the prices were high, and buying when the market was advantageous.

Chavez made at least one trip to New York to make a personal inspection of his investments and market activities. The trip was made by private coach to Kansas City and the remainder by train. He was accompanied by his wife, Josefa. In New York they made the Barcelona Hotel, a Spanish hotel, their headquarters. Although Felipe spoke and wrote English fluently, he felt more at home in a hotel where Spanish was spoken. A copy of the bill from the hotel where he stayed as a guest for three and a half days notes that he was charged a total of \$30 for board and room and an extra \$3.00 for a half bottle of champagne. A son of Felipe, Jose, became the first native New Mexican who ever had a seat on the New York Stock Exchange.

Mining opportunities in Mexico attracted Don Felipe's attention. He invested in mining properties in the Chihuahua area, where in 1888, the Banco Mexicano reported having collected \$10,900 from his investments in Mexico and placing them to his credit at the bank.

Don Felipe's role in politics was largely in the background. Although a Democrat, he privately and financially supported his distinguished cousin, Col. J. Francisco Chavez, which included his election as a Republican, as a delegate to the Congress, in December, 1865, prior to the assassination of President Lincoln. Colonel Chavez wrote his cousin in Belen "The evil forces are at work and all points to doing great harm to the President (Lincoln)." This indeed was a significant, ominous observation by Colone



Chavez of the conspiracy in the wind, particularly since the President was assassinated shortly thereafter.

Don Felipe played a vital role in the largest single economic development in Belen during his lifetime — the construction of the railroad cut-off through the Hub City. As a large stockholder of the A. T. & S. F. Railway Company, he learned that the Company planned to run a cut-off line of the railroad from Amarillo to New Mexico. Preliminary surveys had already been made through Tijeras Canyon, east of Albuquerque, and on to the West Coast. He and John Becker got busy, realizing what the railroad cut-off would be to Belen.

In about 1904, as a two-man, self-appointed Chamber of Commerce, John Becker offered the land to the railroad for the building of the depot, railroad shops, and other incidental required acreage. Becker then directed Paul Dalies, as his agent, to purchase land for use of the railroad. Dalies, a trusted associate in the Becker firm, proved an able and fair negotiator. But the old timers did not want to move from their lands, which they had farmed, as their fathers before them had farmed. There was a sentimental value as well as a practical one, Dalies later recalled.

The problem was solved, Dalies explained, by offering the landowners a similar amount of land, or more, and just as fertile, and some substantial cash, as a little extra, or "de rivete." This closed the exchange in the land deal and everyone seemed happy with the transaction.

This land was later acquired by Becker and donated to the Santa Fe Railway Company, at his expense. Don Felipe, as a prominent citizen and important stockholder in the railroad, advanced the thought to the Santa Fe Company of the many advantages of locating in Belen.

A main line of the railroad had been constructed in 1880, crossing north to south, and now a link with Amarillo, Texas, and the southern route to the States, as well as California on the Pacific Coast, would place Belen on the map as the Hub City of New Mexico. In 1905, the Santa Fe cut-off was constructed into Belen. Soon followed the building of a large roundhouse, shops and railroad yards.



Belen was on its way to a new era of progress.

The community made a rapid change from the old to the new. Jose Dolores Cordova, a keen observer of local history, says: "There are two periods in the history of Belen — first when we had no money and the local people bartered in agricultural produce or livestock. There was no public education and people had a hard time making a living. There was a lot of misery in this era.

"Second, we have the era when money started getting into circulation. This was made possible by the Santa Fe railroad coming into Belen.

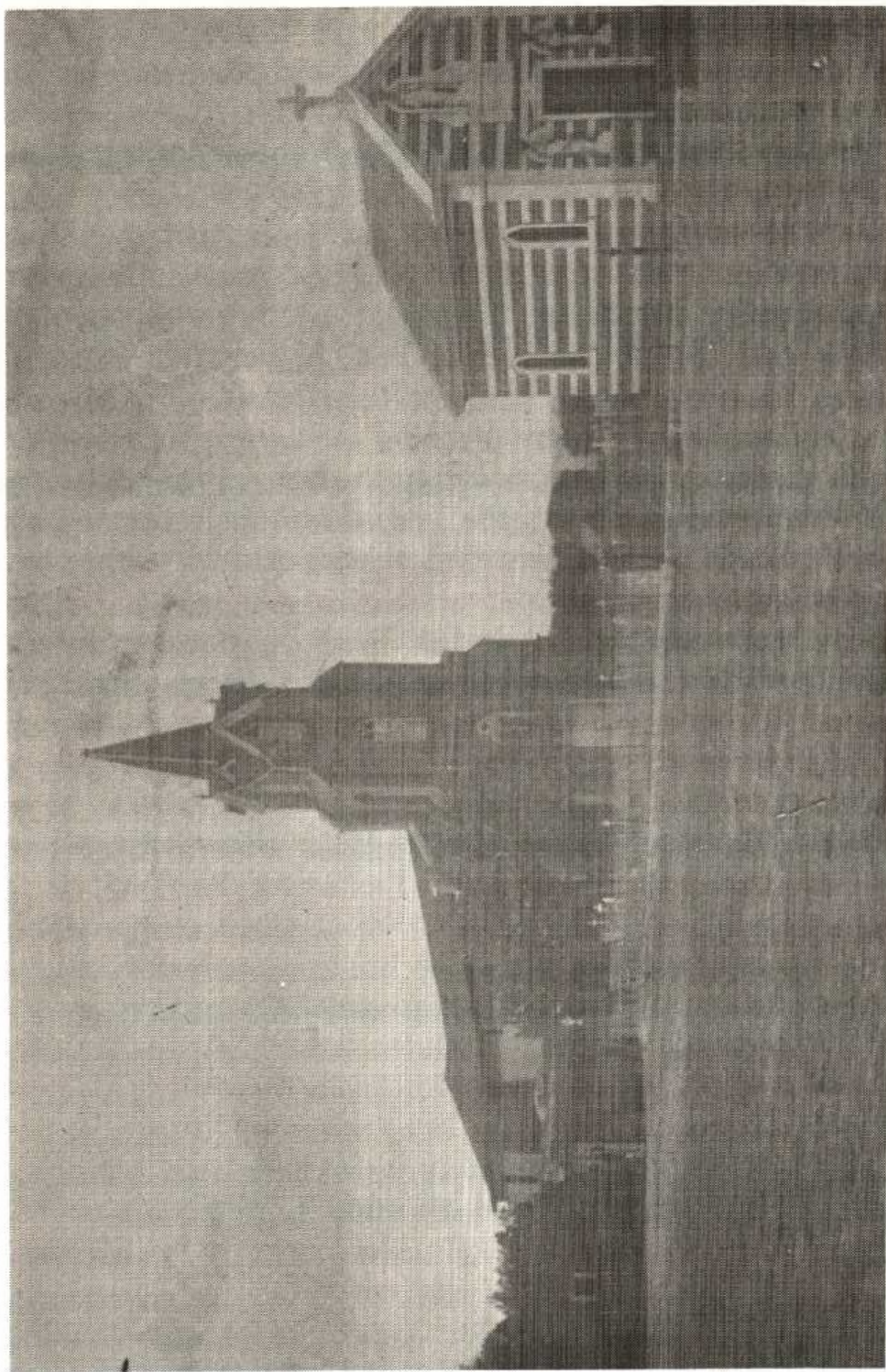
"The poor people no longer had to work as pastores, vaqueros, or farm hands, but could work at a reasonable wage with the Santa Fe and receive cash in pay. After 165 years, the railroad had given Belen the boost it needed. The Land Grant was issued originally in 1740. Belen now took its place in New Mexico history as a modern, thriving community with a future.

"There was no semblance of public education in the area in the 1860's. A great part of the population could not even read or write. An exception was the 'Ricos', who sent their children to private schools in Mexico, or back east."

It is very true, as Don Jose pictured the situation in the 1860's. However, there was a great renaissance and desire for learning. The link of the Santa Fe Trail with the States made citizens of the Belen area more conscious of the importance of learning the English language in promoting commerce and as the language of the future.

In 1863, Jose Chavez y Vallejos ordered from Don Felipe's merchandise store in Belen, books on the subject of arithmetic, grammar, reading and "any other material" to help educate my son, Feliciano, to learn a few words of English ("Que este muchacho aprenda a medio de cucharrear algunas palabras en Ingles"). However, the father soon became impatient concerning his son's learning potentialities and resources. Papa Chavez wrote to Don Felipe that he had acquired a tutor for Feliciano, and after five days of study, the boy did not show much progress. The father did express hope that his son might do better in the future.





Church of Our Lady of Belen. On the side of the building is the residence and rectory. In front of the Church may be seen the masuoleum of Don Felipe Chavez. The family remains are buried there.



Taking note that education was the key to the development of the area, Don Felipe established at his own expense, a private school for girls, known as the "Felipe Chavez School." It was located on what is now South Main Street, just south of the present Mesa Road intersection. He further established a \$20,000 trust fund in his will to be applied for the paying of a salary of a teacher and the upkeep of the school. Other provisions in his will were a stipulation that the school be whitewashed at least twice a year.

The school was non-sectarian, based on the principles that falsehood, disloyalty and immorality would result in expulsion.

Upon the death of Don Felipe, in 1905, his son maintained the school open for a short period of time. But it was not long before public education took over the problem of teaching in Belen.

What type of a man was Don Felipe, personally? In modern lingo, one might say that he was an economic "wheeler dealer".

Ignacio Garcia, who knew him as a young man, describes "El Millonario" as a stocky man, "muy Blanco" (of fair complexion), and that he drank moderately. When he had consumed a certain amount of liquor, Garcia says, he always hummed a very pleasant, continuous and monotonous tune.

Garcia recalls working for Don Felipe at a rate of \$1.00 a day, paid in silver, at the end of each week. When he was working for Chavez, one of the servants gave him a drink of Don Felipe's private liquor stock. For some time, Garcia said he felt very good because he smelled like Don Felipe, and it made him feel like he was a "millonario" himself.

A young French priest who came to Tome in the late 1808's, Juan B. Ralliere, expressed a personal opinion concerning Don Felipe. The occasion was during many floods of that period, and related directly to a particularly disastrous flood of 1884. Says Father Ralliere, "An appeal for help was sent to Belen and Albuquerque for foodstuffs and



assistance to the disaster area. Most of the merchants were very helpful."

Father Ralliere stated that John Becker of Belen immediately sent assistance and several sacks of flour which were crossed on a boat near La Costancia by the "barquero", who paddled across the swollen Rio Grande stream. However, he lamented that "El Millonario", Don Felipe Chavez, of Belen, had sent him a lot of advice, but not a pound of help!

In the many private papers containing the business and personal correspondence of Felipe Chavez, the most touching are many letters written by his mother, Dona Manuela, from Santa Fe, where she lived as a widow after Governor Jose Chavez's death. The many letters are typical of a mother's inquiries about the welfare of her son and his family, and generally giving motherly advice to Felipe to take care of his health and slow up in his many business affairs and activities.

One significant letter, dated February 4, 1869, was written by his uncle by marriage, Antonio Jose Otero of Peralta. Otero served as judge of the first Territorial Supreme Court of New Mexico, and also served as first Judge of the Second Judicial District.

The Chavez family had maintained a private chapel at Parajito, near Los Padillas, and on June 23, 1865, Dolores Teresa de Connelly, aunt, and mother of Colonel J. Francisco Chavez, wrote to Don Felipe, suggesting that all of the religious objects and personal property in the chapel of her late father, Governor Francisco X. Chavez, be donated to the Isleta Church, "because it appears to me that this is where they should remain permanently."

Dolores was the former wife of Governor Mariano Chavez, who married Governor Henry Connelly, (Civil War governor of New Mexico), after her first husband's death. Governor Connelly resided at his hacienda near Peralta, the site of the final volleys of the Civil War in New Mexico, fired in April, 1862, by the retreating routed Confederate forces under the command of General Sibley.

Felipe Chavez and his wife, Josefa, are buried in a



mausoleum just north of Our Lady of Belen Catholic Church. The chapel, which was constructed prior to Don Felipe's death, is made of Italian marble imported by Felipe Chavez from Italy. There were certain statues which he treasured, some of which he gave to the Catholic Church, and some of which he retained in the mausoleum.

Later, upon the death of his son, Jose, it was noted that the family still held 513 shares of common stock in the Santa Fe Railway Company, and among the assets of the estate were approximately 50 acres of land in the heart of Belen, surrounding the old store and home place.

The 50 acres of land was sold under an option to Edmundo C. de Baca, a nephew. It is reported that a few years later one of the lots sold for \$7,500.



## CHAPTER XXII

### MEMORIES OF AN OLDTIMER

The life of a Belen settler was hazardous as late as the 1880's.

Some of these dangers have been recalled by Jose Dolores Cordova of Jarales, a lifelong resident of the community south of Belen. As a small boy, he accompanied his father, Francisco Cordova, on numerous freighting trips between Belen and Springerville, Arizona, a distance of more than 200 miles.

The trip from Belen to Springerville took from 20 to 24 days. His father usually drove a four-yoke team of oxen hitched to a heavy wagon, which loaded weighed around 4,000 pounds. Young Cordova drove a team of four, pulling a smaller wagon with a load of about 2,000 pounds.

Along the route, Don Jose and his father would frequently observe crosses by the side of the road, placed there in memory of persons killed by Indians. Occasionally they would see bones of oxen along the trail — killed by Indians, or perishing after the wagonmaster had been slain.

The boy and his father were always armed, but their weapons were not too efficient — cap and ball muzzle loaders. Some people still used flint-locks.

Although the Cordovas did not experience any Indian attacks while on these freighting trips, history notes Indian trouble continued well into the 1880's, particularly in the Belen area. Such trouble ended only when the Apache chieftains, Geronimo, Nana, Victorio and others among the Navajos had been defeated.

Jose Baca of Belen filed a claim against the federal government for the death of his son, Ignacio Baca, killed by the Apaches under the leadership of Nana. This occurred August 7, 1881, near Rito Quemado, in Valencia County, while the senior Baca was freighting from Arizona to Los



Lunas over the same route that Don Jose journeyed with his father.

But freighting by oxen and mule train was nearing its end at this period. After the advent of the railroad, the senior Cordova lost his job. His employer, Don Felipe Chavez, wealthy Belen merchant and trader, discontinued the freighting business.

Cordova was born in the post-Civil War days. "I first saw the light of day in the little town of Jarales, where I still make my home, on the 7th day of March, 1874." Both his parents were born to the northeast, at Tome.

According to Don Jose, the Civil War ended, not with the surrender of Lee at Appomattox, but with the defeat of the Confederates at Apache Canyon and their retreat to Texas in 1862 — at least for New Mexicans.

Quite a number of young men from Bosque and Jarales areas were enlisted in the Union Army, given guns, and without training, marched down the Rio Grande to fight the Texans. The Texans defeated the Union forces at Valverde, and all the volunteers were left to shift for themselves. They made their way back, somehow, on foot, living on birds and rabbits they killed, and on what they could beg from farm houses along the way, or glean from abandoned cornfields.

History called the southern Army Confederates. Not so Don Jose. They were Texans to him. After the battle at Valverde, many of the wounded, Union and Confederates, were left in the valley where they were cared for. His father, Francisco Cordova, was one of those who returned (having been a Union soldier at Valverde).

Details of the battle related by his father left few pleasant memories of the period. Prior to the decisive battle at Apache Canyon, the Confederates were considered a proud and haughty Army, pillaging houses and farms, taking whatever they wanted. The people hid their belongings. But after Apache Canyon, the Confederates were a different people. They straggled back to Belen in groups, ragged and hungry, and despite the bad times they had



previously given the people, everybody was sorry for them and gave them food.

Luis Huning, who operated a mercantile store in Belen for a while, also had a water power operated mill at Los Chavez. There, he ground corn and wheat for the local residents. Before the grist mill, the people would wash and dry their grain. They would apply lime to the corn to soften. "Arinea" was made out of the wheat, a flour made at home.

According to Cordova, Huning had his own private ditch — cut at a high level to create a waterfall in developing power to turn the water wheel. A viga was attached to the water wheel, providing an axle for his power.

Manuel Otero set up a water wheel mill at La Costancia, but Otero had trouble operating his mill because of lack of water. It was sometime later that John Becker established a flour mill in Belen.

Jose Manuel Gilbert, a veterinary and chiropractor — known as a "sobador," was one of the first Gilberts to settle in the Belen area. He was half French and half Spanish. His son was Gabino Gilbert. Moses Sachs came to Belen about the same time from Europe, establishing a winery about 150 yards west of the present Feil & Ellermeyer department store. Adolf Didier, also of French descent, came to Belen about 1888 and purchased from another French family a vineyard further west of the Sachs' winery.

Don Jose says there were no bridges to cross the Rio Grande. The people used boats when the water was high and at other times, they simply walked across. The principal crops grown in the late 19th century were squash, melons, beans, fruit, wheat, chili and corn. There was no alfalfa.

In his student days, 1884 to 1900, educational opportunities were rare — except for the families with means. Only private schools or private tutors were available. Cordova himself made a determined effort to get an education. In the fall of 1897, with a couple of dollars in his pocket and his clothing in a bag, he walked the distance to Albuquerque. There, he inquired the way to the University —



then having a population of 100 pupils and 13 teachers. In 1898, he was admitted as a special student in the Normal department. Albuquerque then was a town of about 4,000. Only after numerous inquiries and rebuffs, Cordova obtained an interview with a Mr. Hargis, who was president of the University. Despite his lack of preparation, he was permitted to register as a special student. He found sufficient employment to rent a room, where he did his own cooking. His classes were in history, language and some mathematics. Among the students he recalls were the children of John Becker of Belen and the Kempenich family of Los Lunas.

President Tom Popejoy of the University of New Mexico has confirmed the Cordova enrollment. In a letter to Gilberto Espinosa, dated March 18, 1864, Popejoy said:

"Mr. Cordova's name is printed in our catalogue for the year 1897-98 when he was enrolled as a special student. He was enrolled as a special student in our normal school in the year 1898-99.

"According to our record, dated Jan. 25, 1899, Mr. Cordova enrolled in courses in Spanish, English, arithmetic, spelling and reading."

This constituted the formal education of Jose Dolores Cordova.

#### Footnote:

\*The Cordova collections were gained in conversations with the venerable resident of Jarales, during the year 1962, by Tibo J. Chavez. These recollections are his story of Belen and its neighboring settlements of Jarales, Sabinal, Los Lunas, Bosque, Los Chavez and Tome. Although about 90 years of age, he appeared hale and hearty, and his memory, though sometimes hazy on details, was generally good.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### A REBELLION

The Thirteen Colonies won their freedom several years before 1791. George Washington had been inaugurated as the first president two years before. A constitutional convention had been held in Philadelphia four years earlier. Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson were feuding.

But the residents, in the Middle Rio Grande Valley, were, in 1791, still under the rule of the Royal Crown of Spain. There was an insurrection in the Rio Abajo in 1791, just 51 years after the founding of Belen.

While minor in nature, the incident demonstrates how firmly the people were governed; how little actual freedom they enjoyed. Their time was not their own. Failure to obey an order to work carried with it the penalty of the crown. Modern day New Mexicans probably will find it difficult to compare their present day freedoms with the lack of such freedoms late in the 18th century.

Toribio Garcia Jurado was a resident of the department of Belen in 1791 when an order came down from Santa Fe, by way of Isleta, for Garcia and his neighbors to take their oxen teams from Belen to the Pueblo of Isleta. Those found to be of service were to be sent on to the town of San Phelipe (near modern Albuquerque) to build a bridge across the Rio Grande.

The problems confronting these early Belen citizens were many. Oxen were their only animals; food for the oxen was scarce; Indians were raiding Belen frequently. It was dangerous to leave the department unprotected. But the order was meant to be enforced.

There was no mention of pay. The only consideration being that at Isleta, they would separate all that would be considered of no practical use; also the lieutenant was ordered to check the people in the towns because they should



not remain without men since the Apaches were raiding these towns every day and they do not wish to get caught in a predicament.

After three days traveling on horseback soliciting the men to cooperate, Lt. Don Miguel Baca advised the Isleta magistrate, Manuela de Arteaga (Rubrica), that he had been unable to get Garcia and his neighbors to cooperate with oxen teams and workers. They, in turn, tell him (Lt. Baca) that they cannot contribute teams of oxen and workers, "and for said reason, he placed them all in jail."

This rebellion was only from the Plaza of Gabaldones to the lower end and (south). There were exceptions. Lt. Santiago Trujillo and 15 others cooperated with their oxen teams and their persons in helping with cutting vigas for the bridge. Nine of the men contributed one team of oxen each, three had only one oxen, and three "with his person only," no oxen.

Toribio Garcia pleaded meanwhile that his oxen were exhausted, having been hauling wood continuously to carry out their Majesty's prior orders. He argued that if required to haul rock and timber for the church, "we would lose the oxen and everything would be in vain." Garcia also noted that the rock was not close by, but "more than three leagues away."

As representative of the common group from Belen, Garcia transmitted this message on the 11th day of December of the year of 1791, from this town of Our Lady of Belen to the Alcalde Mayor (Chief Alcalde).

His Majesty at Isleta, Manuel de Arteaga, found Garcia's message "nothing more than excuses for opposition." . . . the petitioner representing the others, does not offer to execute or oppose the superior order and, more important, when the same are directed to the general welfare or public welfare of an entire province for which there is no excuse."

Garcia contended that he had acted on behalf of all the neighbors in the area and at their request. This was partially disproved, because 14 of them had cooperated with authorities. He was then ordered to go to the Villa of Santa



Fe. Manuel de Arteaga told of a trip to Belen during which he met several groups of men.

"On the road we met a group of more than 50 men who, united, were walking upward and, without holding up my horse, I crossed through them and they only removed their hats and tried to speak to me, but I did not give them a chance . . .

"In a short time I met another group of 40 men . . . I went right through them without giving them time to speak to me anymore, although they desired it. It is worthy to note that this last group had been released from prison and after reaching the home of the lieutenant they asked for permission to speak to me and I conceded the same . . .

"On the next day, I met a group of 70 men on horseback and on foot . . . "

Arteaga called four men to serve as witnesses, then sent for Garcia, who had waited several days for him, in anticipation of making the trip to Santa Fe. All the larger delegations had sought to assure the authorities that Garcia was their representative, and that if he was guilty, so were they.

But only Garcia and three sons, Javier, Pablo and Estevan, were permitted to go to Santa Fe. The authorities would not permit the other men to leave the area completely isolated, due to the Indian danger.

The Governor of New Mexico, Fernando de la Concha (Rubrica), under the Royal laws, authorized Lt. and Comandante Interino, Don Antonio Guerrero and the Alcalde Mayor of that same jurisdiction to take prisoners in the Royal Jail of this Villa — Toribio Garcia, Javier Garcia, Andres Torres, Juan Domingo, Paulin Baca, Joseph de Luna, and Francisco Pino from the head of the disorder.

These seven men were interrogated by the captain of militias and alcalde mayor, Don Antonio Josef Ortiz, in an effort to determine who were the first to oppose the plan and who opposed the carrying of the rock.

They were each asked if they know the allegiance due the King and those who represent his Royal Highness; if they know the punishment deserved and which should be



imposed on those that form a part of such revolt, and disturb the public tranquility.

Each of the seven defendants was brought separately before Don Antonio, the captain of the military. Toribio Garcia, the first to appear, said he was chosen to represent his neighbors, to tell of the disability of their oxen. He did not know who instigated his neighbors to act. He said he knew the punishment that is imposed on those who from a treasonable act. Garcia replied that he had erred and that he is willing to abide by the ruling of the authorities, and he accordingly signed the declaration.

Each of the subsequent witnesses, or defendants, testified they did not know who first opposed work on the construction of the bridge; nor did they know who instigated the local citizens to the opposition meeting; and that all joined in choosing Toribio Garcia as their agent to represent them, because of their inability to comply with the orders because their oxen were awfully thin.

If any wrong had been committed by Toribio Garcia, all were ready to be held accountable, since all had named him as their agent, and if there was any opposition, it was the opposition of all the group.

Governor Concha, after reviewing the statements of the seven defendants, ruled it would be excessive punishment to impose the penalty prescribed by law for crimes of a similar nature.

"I have determined and hereby determine, that the alcalde mayor (chief alcalde) of this villa will impose a fine of three pesos of silver to each one which will satisfy the punishment under the charges and said fines to be applied, first to the cost of these proceedings, and the balance applied to the maintenance of the Apache mission in the Belen jurisdiction; it being further understood that, if the subjects violate the law in the future, the maximum penalty of the law will be applied. Subjects are further given their liberty with the above conditions.

s/ Fernando e La Concha (rubrica)



In this Villa of Santa Fe, on the 1st day of July of said year, I, Antonio Jose Ortiz, alcalde mayor of this villa, by virtue of the acts aforementioned, I notified the subjects involved of the disposition of this matter and the fine assessed the same being satisfied, I ordered their liberty in accordance with the orders.

s/ Antonio Jose Ortiz



## CHAPTER XXIV

### AN ASSASSINATION

An assassination at a ranch home near Cedarvale, in Torrance County, on November 26, 1904, brought to a tragic end the distinguished career of Valencia County's most colorful figure, Col. Jose Francisco Chavez.

The rancher-soldier-lawyer-statesman was dining with friends on a quiet evening at Pinos Wells when an unknown assailant fired a shot through the window, killing the 71-year-old Chavez instantly. An excerpt from the message of Miguel A. Otero, Governor of New Mexico, to the Thirty-Sixth legislative assembly, January 16, 1905, says: "Colonel Chavez was shot while eating supper. The murderer crept to the window near where the Colonel was sitting, and by the aid of the light in the room where the victim was, fired the fatal shot, the ball passing through the body, causing immediate death."

Ironically, when he was slain, Chavez was engaged in writing a history of New Mexico, having been made the official Historian of the Territory by an act of the last legislature.

Although Governor Otero offered a reward of \$2,500 for any information identifying the assassin, the reward was never claimed.

Much mystery surrounds the slaying. There were even rumors that "higher-ups" pardoned and promised immunity to a "life term" in exchange for the deed. Colonel Chavez' remains were buried in the National Cemetery in Santa Fe.

During a lifetime of almost three quarters of a century, 1833-1904, Colonel Chavez attained wealth in farming and stock raising in Valencia County. He was regarded as a man of strong convictions and was absolutely fearless. Besides many political foes, he waged unremitting war



against a notorious band of livestock thieves in his section of the Territory, and was the principal party in sending two of its members to prison.

Educated in St. Louis and New York, Chavez' career included Indian fighting, winning a promotion to lieutenant colonel from President Lincoln "for gallant and meritorious services," and represented Valencia County in the territorial legislature for 14 terms, was elected a delegate to Congress, studied law and served as District Attorney of the Second Judicial District. When the new county of Chaves (Roswell, the county seat) was created, it was named after Colonel Chavez.

Of the 14 terms Chavez was elected to the legislature, he served as president of the Council (name of the legislature in those days) eight terms. It is said by those who recall his service in state government, that Chavez was so powerful in Santa Fe that the Council or Legislature would not open until he arrived in the capital in his buckboard. It might be a day or two late, if the buckboard was bogged down in the mud.

At the time of his assassination, Colonel Chavez was serving as superintendent of public instruction for the state, on appointment by Governor Otero.

Although a Republican, and related by marriage to the Oteros and Lunas of Los Lunas, he soon had sharp differences with the latter, resulting in a bitter struggle for control of the party reins. The difference were so serious that Father Railliere, priest at Tome, wrote in his diary:

"The political fight between Colonel Chavez and the Oteros seems to get more serious and bitter every day. I don't even care to listen to their confessions anymore."

And so it was, in order to bring some semblance of mediation and harmony between these factions, Valencia County was split in 1903. The Lunas-Oteros retained the west side of the mountain (Manzano) and the valley (Rio Grande), and Colonel Chavez was given the east side of the mountain, and thereby, the new county of Torrance was created. Colonel Chavez moved his residence and com-



menced his livestock industry anew in the Pinos Wells area, near Cedarvale.

This Tome-Manzano-Estancia area was a very strategic one in the economy of the day. The sheep concentration was particularly great around Pinos Wells where the Lunas and Oteros had their sheep. From Los Lunas, the Lunas, the Oteros, John Becker and Felipe Chavez all journeyed to Mountain area (Punta de Agua) either through the Tome area or through Abo Canyon into the Mountainair region.

From either Manzano or Tome, there were at least two roads which led to El Paso and on to Chihuahua. One went on to the Jornada del Muerto, the other down through Tularosa, this by-passing Socorro. This situation also made the Belen-Tome area approachable from the Santa Fe country north and from the Chavez country areas south.

The story of Jose Francisco Chavez began June 27, 1883. He was born on that date in Los Padillas, southwest of Albuquerque, in Bernalillo County, the son of Governor Don Mariano Chavez and Dolores Perea Chavez (who was the daughter of Pedro Jose Perea) — and grandson of Don Francisco Xavier Chavez who was governor of New Mexico under the Republic of Mexico. Colonel Chavez' father was chief of staff under Governor Manuel Armijo in the Revolution of 1837, and as such was inspector general of all military forces in New Mexico. In 1840 Don Mariano Chavez became a political chief in New Mexico. After the death of Don Mariano, his widow married Dr. Henry Connelly, New Mexico's Civil War governor.

In 1841, J. Francisco Chavez was sent to St. Louis University with the parting words from his father, "The heretics are going to over-run all this country. Go and learn their language and come back prepared to defend your people." The young man finished his education with a two-year course in the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City and returned to New Mexico in 1852.

During 1852 and 1853, young Chavez made several trips to California overland. Later he served as a soldier against the Navajos (prior to the Civil War), and in 1861 was commissioned as Major of the 1st New Mexico Infantry



by President Lincoln and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel "for gallant and meritorious service." Keleher differs slightly from this account, stating that when the 1st Regiment of New Mexico Volunteers was organized, Connelly gave his stepson the commission as Major and upon the resignation of Colonel St. Vrain, J. Francisco Chavez was appointed to fill that office.

In 1862, Col. Chavez participated in the battle of Val Verde and later on helped to establish Ft. Wingate and was in command of that post for some time. He commanded the troops, escorting the first Territorial Governor of Arizona to that newly-named territory, together with his staff, to Fort Whipple, Arizona, on December 31, 1863.

Col. Chavez was mustered out of the U. S. Army in 1865 and was that same year elected Territorial delegate to Congress. He was re-elected in 1867 after a bitter contest, and again in 1869, but was defeated in 1871 by J. M. Gallegos.

This was a bitter and fiercely fought campaign, which saw a riot occur in the streets of Mesilla between the two parties. The foray ended with nine men slain and 40 to 50 wounded. The judge for the Judicial district there was called from Albuquerque, returning without any of the rioters having been punished or indicted.

Mary Bowie and Colonel Chavez were married in 1857. She died in 1874, leaving two daughters, Lola and Francesca. Lola married Mariano Armijo, descendant of the prominent Armijo family of Bernalillo County. Their son, George Washington Armijo, was born at Peralta, Valencia County, on March 16, 1877, and died in Santa Fe on February 16, 1947. Armijo was a member of Roosevelt's Rough Riders, and from 1900 to 1947, he held public office almost continuously in New Mexico. The Chavezes' other daughter, Francesca, died in 1895.

Colonel Chavez was among those who worked tirelessly for statehood for New Mexico, and served as president of the Constitutional convention of 1889. He was appointed, along with others, to plead the case for statehood for New Mexico in the 57th Congress.



The New Mexico Historical Review quotes an item from the Albuquerque Morning Democrat of August 8, 1889 to the effect that the New Mexico Constitution was refused in that it was "perpetuating the boss rule of Perea, Catron Chavez and Prichard"; nevertheless, among many, Chavez was held in regard and honored as the father of the statehood movement.





Colonel J. Francisco Chavez, who was assassinated at Pinos Wells on May 29, 1892. Colonel Chavez served 14 terms in the Legislative Council in Santa Fe from Valencia County.



## CHAPTER XXV

### MISCELLANEA

#### THE CHURCH MOVES WEST

One of Belen's most bitter community fights occurred in the middle of the 19th century. The issue: a proposal to relocate Our Lady of Belen Catholic Church.

The dispute arose in the 1850's. The church then in what is now called 'Old Town', had been damaged by heavy floods. Soon after, a movement began to relocate the church on higher ground. The Belen Land Grant offered to donate a large tract of land which received the approval of the officiating bishop, Rev. John B. Lamy, first bishop of this diocese.

Don Jose Dolores Cordova of Jarales recollects an episode during the dispute, related to him by his mother.

When she was a young girl, she was taken to the church for confirmation. Bishop Lamy was the officiating priest. While the ceremonies were being held, the entire ceiling plaster fell. All the worshipers fled the building.

The move to relocate the church began immediately. The advocates for rebuilding the church on the west side were nicknamed the "Karanklanes" (the Calicoers), because they wore calico blouses. The dispute was hot and heavy, resulting in very bitter feelings between the old timers and the west siders; so bitter in fact, that several families left Belen and took up residence in the Corrales area when the church was moved westerly to higher and drier ground.

After Bishop Lamy had approved the move, the Easterners, or old timers, led by Juan Domingo Valencia, filed an action in Chancery against Antonio Julian, Bishop Lamy and others, seeking to enjoin the removal of the church. Kirby Benedict, one of the first judges of the New Mexico Superior (now Supreme) Court, named by General Kearny,



heard the case and rendered his decision in favor of the Westerners, the "Karanklanes".

Patricio Baca and his son, Jose Maria Baca, were both leaders in moving the church to the west (Baca Town, the location was called), and were both named in the legal proceedings filed in the District Court. Jose Maria Baca had a son, Damian Baca, who in turn has a son who bore his (Damian's) father's name, Jose Maria, who lives in Belen today.

Casimira Baca, present resident of Baca, is related to Juan Domingo Valencia, another advocate of moving the church. Rafael Cordova, the grandfather of Jose Dolores Cordova, present resident of Jarales, was one of the leaders of the opposition to relocate.

## THE OLDEST CHURCH

Isleta or Acoma, which is the older church? There is question as to which is the oldest in point of establishment and which the oldest in continual use. It is generally accepted that both were established about 1609. In fact, neither can claim continued occupancy.

Isleta did not join the 1680 Pueblo uprising, but later did oppose the Spaniards and the pueblo was destroyed by Otermin, abandoned and re-established about 1705.

Acoma did join the Uprising, but the church was not destroyed. When De Vargas returned, he found it intact. It is now about the same as it was except for repairs and maintenance. However, it appears that Acoma was not re-established as a Mission until a little after Isleta. This leads these writers to the opinion that Isleta has held services the longest since its second beginning, but Acoma is the oldest built church. The Isleta church was entirely rebuilt when the Mission there was re-established in 1705.

## INDIAN CAMPAIGNER

One of the greatest Indian campaigners in New Mexico history was Colonel Antonio Manuel Chavez, whose



principal weapon was the bow and arrow. Spaniards were most proficient in the use of the bow, which was the most available weapon they had.

Chavez was born in Atrisco on Oct. 18, 1818, the son of Julian Chavez and Maria de la Luz Garcia de Noriega. The family moved to San Mateo in western Valencia County on the fringe of the Navajo country when Antonio Manuel was but nine years of age. Even as a boy he was expert with the bow and few, even Indians, were his equal.

From the age of 14, Chavez took part in Indian campaigns. His body was covered with scars of arrow wounds which ultimately brought his death.

According to Chavez's own statement, 300 of his immediate family (including cousins) died at the hands of the Indians, and during his lifetime. It was the sister of Chavez, Catalina, who was promised in marriage to the son of a Comanche chieftain, and when the deal was off, this indirectly resulted in the massacre of almost the entire population of Tome. (Lumis, a New Mexico David and numerous other texts).

### THE HOME OF A "RICO"

A colorful description of a home at Los Padillas, in 1846, is related in the diary of Susan Magoffin ("Down the Santa Fe Trail"). Dated November 13, 1846, it reads:

"This morning, we called to see the widow of Don Mariano Chavez, who was one of the chief men of New Mexico till his death about a year ago. His wealth was immense and his lands (for Mexico) were improved accordingly. The house is very large — this is well furnished with handsome Brussels carpet, crimson worsted curtains with gilded rings and cornices, white marble slab pier tables, hair and crimson worsted chairs, candelabra, and all the New Mexicans have the greatest passion for framed pictures and large looking glasses."



"In this room of the Chavez home are eight or ten gilt framed mirrors all about the wall. Around the Patio are chambers, store rooms, kitchen and others, all exceedingly neat and clean.

"La Senora met us and opened the great door; she was very polite and friendly and invited us to spend some time with her. All was with true hospitality and I really regret we were not able to do so."

Mariano Chavez and his wife aided the Texas prisoners who were being marched on foot to Chihuahua. They crossed the river at Padillas and gave the prisoners clothing and food, according to Josiah Gregg in his "Commerce of the Prairies." Mariano Chavez was a former governor of New Mexico. His widow later married Dr. Henry Connelly, who became New Mexico's Civil War governor. He was a doctor by profession and was prominent in the Mexican-United States war period, during American Occupation and through the Civil War. The Connelys maintained their hacienda at Peralta.

#### PERALTA SCHOOL - 1840

Educational opportunities in the Rio Abajo area were very limited, even in the 19th century. Opportunities for the poor were almost "nil". Those who had the means, the "Ricos", used private schools or private tutors. The priests were probably the first tutors. Padre Antonio Jose Martinez, at his own expense, opened a private school at Taos in 1826. In the same year, the vicar, Felipe Ortiz, opened a private school in Santa Fe.

Other private schools followed, in Santa Fe, Bernalillo and Albuquerque. In 1838-39, at Rancho de Albuquerque, Professor Felix Benavidez conducted a private school. Among his students were Manuel Aranda, Jose Armijo, Nestor Armijo (great grandfather of Peter Gallagher, Albuquerque attorney), Jose de la Luz Chavez, Felipe Chavez ("El Millonario"), Perfecto Yrissari, Joachin Perea and



many others, all prominently identified with the story of the Rio Abajo.

The area south of Isleta gained its first of the private schools in 1840, at Los Pinos, near Peralta. One Professor Uranda conducted the school. Among his students were Francisco Perea, Joachin Perea, Miguel A. Otero and Tomas Gutierrez.

It is interesting to note the future careers of these students. Miguel A. Otero was a delegate to the 35th Congress. Colonel Francisco Perea, soldier and statesman, was a delegate to the 39th Congress; Colonel J. Francisco Chavez, Indian and Civil War veteran, was a delegate to the 39th Congress and the 40th Congress; Felipe Chavez was the Belen millionaire, and Joachin Perea campaigned the New England States for Abraham Lincoln. Nestor Armijo and his brother, Nicolas T. Armijo, were wealthy merchants, Nicolas in Albuquerque, where he was a prominent banker, and one of the founders of New Albuquerque. Nestor Armijo moved to Las Cruces, where he was a prominent and successful merchant. Most all of these mentioned were double first cousins and descendants of Francisco Xavier Chavez, first Mexican Governor of New Mexico.

Quite a distinguished Alumni group from a country school in Peralta. Verdad!

## MEXICAN SPANISH

The Mexican language, and there is such, is a blending of Spanish, the language of Mexico's conqueror's, and Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs. The Lengua Nacional, the result of this merger of tongues, is spoken with a distinct Mexican lilt. Even the English language has absorbed some of the nahuatl words commonly used for birds, animals, drinks, foods and household articles.

Montezuma, as we now use in common usage, was probably Moctezuma. In New Mexico we refer to mud as "soquete"; the Spanish is "lodo" — we refer here to an owl as a "Tecolote". This is Nahuatl, the Spanish word is "Buo" or "Lechuza". There was no such "avis rara" in New Mex-



ico as the Nightingale (Spanish "Risuenor"). The Spanish found here its counterpart in what is called, from its Indian name, the "Zenzontle." And for that matter, why stop with the "Nahuatl" contributions? Our word "Noria" and our word "Acequia", good Spanish words today, but definitely of Arabic derivation. Whenever you run into a Spanish (New Mexican) word that ends in *te*, be assured that it is a Nahuatl (Aztec) word originally ending in *tl*.

For example:	English	Nahuatl
	Avocado	Ahuactl
	Cacao (Cocoa)	Cacahuatl
	Chocolate	Chocolatl
	Coyote	Coyotl
	Chicle	Chitli
	Chili	Chilli
	Mesquite	Mizquittl
	Ocelot	Ocelotl
	Peyote	Peyotl
	Tamale	Tamalli
	Tequila	Tequilan
	Tomato	Tomatl

We must bear this in mind. New Mexico was settled in 1598 by a group, two-thirds of whom were Spanish born; one-third born in New Spain. Those who were Spanish born, had been in New Spain many years. The settlers who came to New Mexico brought with them a culture and a language, pure Spanish of the Cervantian age, tempered with their most half a century mingling with the Aztec. So it is that we find in New Mexican Spanish, not only archaic language long forgotten in Modern Mexico, such as *Muncho* for *mucho*; *ansi* for *asi*, and *comites* for *comiste*.

Vicente Blasco Ibanez, one of Spain's most distinguished novelists of the early 20th century, remarked to one of the authors of this work, Gilberto Espinosa, at a luncheon had with ex-Governor Thomas J. Mabry, that he was enchanted at the old and pure Spanish he heard from the older people in the small and remote sections of New



Mexico he visited. So, when someone argues that New Mexicans speak a dialect, answer him that he knows not where of he speaks. The New Mexican brought to New Mexico the language, traditions and culture of mother Spain, in its pristine glory.

## NEW MEXICO PRODUCTS

"Punche", a wild tobacco, ground in the Rio Abajo area. The product was never exported, and there is no indication that tobacco was ever imported from Mexico.

Caná Aigra. (Caniagra) was used in tanning. The first reports of the Gringos give great stress to its value.

## CHILI

This poses a 64 dollar question. Truly, no New Mexican, native or gringo, can claim patriotism if he is not a lover of Chili.

Chili here in Nuevo Mejico, is not Chili in Mexico, although the plant has a common origin. For example, a Dictionary of Mexican Idioms defines "Chil con Carne" as "An abominable dish concocted in Texas and called Mexican!"

Dr. David Campa, distinguished scholar and now on the University of Denver faculty, asserts in an article on Chili that it was of origin in the island of the Carribean and from there went to Mexico and the continent.

However, records and paintings show that the Indians of Mexico gave tribute to the Aztec lords of peppers (Chili) long before Columbus paid them a visit. What is puzzling is that there is no record of Chili in New Mexico prior to the arrival of the Spaniards.

In Antonio de Barriero's articles in 1830, "Glances Over New Mexico," he does not mention "Chili". None of the records of the early explorers mention "Chili" either.

It would seem that chili was brought to New Mexico by the early Spanish explorers or by the Mexican Indians who accompanied them. Certainly no archeological studies



known by the authors of this book make any reference to Chili among the primitive New Mexican tribes. "Sepa Dios."

## CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

A simple theft in 1746 received about as much legal attention as a similar case would be expected to get today . . . almost 220 years later.

A petition for criminal prosecution was filed by Don Juan Del Pino, traveling merchant and resident of this Kingdom of New Mexico against two Genizaro Indians who live in the place called Belen within the jurisdiction of the villa of San Phelipe of Albuquerque.

The complaint alleged that certain items, 10 treated skins, and 10 pair of hose, "were stolen from the home of Don Juan Miguel Albares del Castillo. The items had been stored in the Castillo home.

It was on Christmas Eve, 1746, that an Indian called "El Cuajo" and a companion, Antonio El Pelon (Tony the bald-headed one), allegedly broke into the Castillo home and stole 250 leather items bearing brand and 59 pair of hose, and, subsequently, they entered the same home a second time and took the 20 pair of hose and skins.

The plaintiff, del Pino, called on Royal Assistance and Royal Justice. Not satisfied with the lower court's handling of the matter, del Pino appealed to the captain general, Don Joaquin Codallos y Rabal, governor of the Kingdom of New Mexico, in Santa Fe. The latter directed the chief Alcalde, Joseph Baca, of the Villa of Albuquerque, to hear the case.

The Superior Tribunal called for further justification and clarification as to the facts of the robbery, since the only proof was the allegation made by the petitioner.

The Indian defendant, El Cuajo, disappeared. Antonio El Pelon, the accomplice, admitted receiving some of the loot. The entire file was transmitted on Aug. 3, 1747, from the Pueblo of Ysleta, to the Governor, Joaquin Codallos y Rabal. The final disposition of the case was never determined, although the available file fills some 11 page.



## "PAID IN KIND"

Most purchases, including real estate, were "paid in kind" as late as the first half of the 19th century in the Rio Abajo.

Four separate deeds, dated from 1824 to 1836, each showed payment other than money.

Four tracts of land were transferred in the year 1820 by Francisco Sarracino to Orvano Diego Armijo in this place of Santa Maria de Belen.

Don Francisco was a resident of Parajito in the jurisdiction of the Villa of Albuquerque, and Armijo was a resident of "the place called Los Trujillos of the Plaza of Belen."

Sarracino stated that he sold to Armijo four tracts of cultivated land in the said plaza of Los Trujillos "for the price and amount of 400 pesos paid in kind (or products of the land.)"

On April 18, 1824, in the jurisdiction of Santa Maria of Belen, Jose Chavez and Diego Armijo appeared before Don Pablo Baca, regidor (mayor). Chavez acknowledged that he had sold to said Armijo 50 varas of land in the place called La Cienega for the price of 50 pesos, in kind, corn, beans and wheat. A deed conveying property from Jacinto Varela to Jose Yriversa is drawn and dated at "Santa Maria de Belen" on the 30th day of December, 1835. The instrument is drawn in the handwriting (quill pen) of Juan Cruz Baca, constitutional Alcalde of the area.

Varela conveyed to Yriversa land measuring 278½ varas (one vara equals 33 inches) wide, and bounded by the Acequia de Los Garcias, which still exists today. The land was sold by the party of the first part to the party of the second part in consideration of 40 pesos paid in kind or in kind of the earth or barter. The consideration included 12 female goats, 10 bags of corn, 19 sarapes, 10 handful of tobacco and 10 ristras (strings) of chili.

The deed was signed by Juan Cruz Baca as Alcalde and his Rubrica appears after his name. The Rubrica was the standard practice and an original symbol adopted by an





**Francisco X. Vigil, Undersheriff of Valencia County. He was killed in a shootout in 1898 with "Bronco Bill", train robber.**



individual with the apparent practical purpose that his name would not be forged.

And, the fourth deed, dated Sept. 20, 1836, is issued in the department of Nuestra Senora de Belen, showing that Rosalilla Romero has paid to Senor Bisente Baca, in behalf of her son-in-law, Esteban Torres, \$350, in kind. This was due by Torres to Baca and said tract of land is in width 80 varas, and 87 varas long.

## THIEVES MOUNTAIN

There are few more colorful stories of the Old West than two true events staged at Belen, in the true tradition of that era — a train hold-up in 1898, and a bank robbery in 1905. In the train robbery, two prominent desperadoes took \$2,500 in a spectacular piece of western banditry and subsequently killed three possemen in a shoot-out. And, in the bank robbery, three other bandits escaped by horseback with \$5,000 to their credit.

## THE TRAIN HOLDUP

William Walters, better known as "Bronco Bill", and William Johnson, better known as "Kid Johnson", two Texas desperadoes, came into Belen about the middle of the year 1898 to look over the town. They looked just like two ordinary cowpokes as they came into town on their ponies, which is exactly the impression they wanted to give. As a matter of fact, they were two of the most fearless and reckless desperadoes that had ever hit town. They belonged to a gang of cattle thieves and train robbers who had been plundering and plaguing Texas and New Mexico and were still at large.

The two desperadoes had advance information that the Santa Fe Railroad express train was transporting a valuable cargo in the Wells-Fargo safe on that train, and they made their plans accordingly to hold up the train, so it was just a question of working out the details. The Main line of the A. T. & S. F. crossed Belen from north to south



before the cut-off was built. On May 23, 1898, the desperate desperadoes decided they would hide their horses south of Belen, about two miles, in the Pueblitos area, near the home of Felipe Castillo, where they could make a safe getaway after the robbery. They walked back to Belen, bought their tickets at the railroad station, boarded the train, and soon found their way to the engine where they stuck a big six-shooter into the ribs of the engineer, forcing him to stop the train in the Pueblitos area. Next, they uncoupled the express train from the engine and ordered the engineer to drive south, leaving them unmolested to break into the safe. A stick of dynamite was applied to the Wells-Fargo safe, blowing it open where they scooped approximately \$25,000, according to best estimates, loaded the money into their saddle bags, and took off on their horses to the Ladrona Mountains, or the Thieves' Mountains, southwest of Belen.

The Sheriff's office at Los Lunas was immediately notified by the Santa Fe officials of the train robbery at Belen. The sheriff was Jesus Sanchez of Valencia. His young deputy was Francisco Vigil, 37 years of age at the time. He was the son of Martin Vigil of Los Chavez, the eldest of 12 children. His sister was Emelia Vigil Chavez, mother of Tibo Chavez, co-author. Francisco Vigil mounted his favorite alazan (sorrel) horse and started for Belen where he endeavored to recruit a posse. However, many of those approached excused themselves, saying they had work to do, or other flimsy excuses, knowing that the mission was very risky and dangerous. Vigil finally succeeded in recruiting Daniel Bustamante, father of Sam Bustamante of Belen, who was the local blacksmith at the time. Mr. Bustamante had a little blacksmith shop at the Fred Scholle property on Highway 85. He was considered a crack shot "con la carenta y uno" (the forty-one); this was his favorite gun.

Bustamante was a cousin of Vigil and Vigil had served as his Padrino (best man) when Daniel Bustamante was married to Sabrina Torres, a few years previous. Therefore, he did not refuse his best friend when he asked him to go on this dangerous mission.



The two started west across the mesa toward the Ladron Mountains where they soon picked up the trail, which skirted around the north edge of the Ladrones. They then proceeded west on the bed of the Salado River to the Indian community of Alamo. Deputy Vigil and Bustamante were told by the Alamo Indians that the thieves were just ahead on the trail and that they were fully equipped with side arms and rifles on their saddles. The Indians warned them that the fugitives appeared to be very dangerous desperadoes, and that they (the Alamos) had a plan for taking the outlaws Indian style. The Navajo Indians at Alamo were well known and friendly to Vigil, since his father, Martin Vigil, had owned and operated a ranch at Toribio Springs nearby for many years. The friendly Indians pleaded with Vigil to let them take the thieves that evening; while they were in their deepest slumber they would steal into their camp and take them without a struggle. Deputy Vigil, considering himself a valiant man and a man of honor, refused the Indian plan and told them that he, Vigil, had a court order or warrant for the arrest of these criminals, and that under the law, it was required that he read them the order of arrest before taking them prisoners.

The Indians finally acquiesced to the answer and reason of "El Tata" (the father) as they called Vigil, but nevertheless offered their help in the mission. The assistance of two Apaches, who were armed, was accepted to join the law officers as members of the posse. At sun-up the next morning, the posse noticed that the wanted bandits were nearby, as smoke from their camp was visible in the nearby mountain ridge. Deputy Vigil had the posse get ready to close in on the thieves. As they approached the camp, the train robbers were caught by surprise and could have been captured on the spot by making the most of the advantage, but again, Deputy Vigil insisted that he read the warrant which he had. As Vigil started to read the warrant, Bronco Bill and Kid Johnson made the most of the bravado, slid for their side arms and shot Vigil, instantly killing him; Bustamante managed to take temporary cover behind a sabino (cedar), and the Indians managed to fire a few



rounds before the expert shots killed both Bustamante and one Indian. The other Indian got away and managed to escape. Bustamante had fired nine shots and was getting to re-load when he received the final shot that killed him. Although Bronco Bill was shot in the gun battle, he and Kid Johnson managed to get away, picked up their horses and crossed over into Arizona.

Both Vigil and Bustamante were buried at Santa Rita, which was a community nearby. Later, the family of Vigil requested that his body be removed and returned to the community of Valencia, where the family lived. Vigil is buried at the Valencia church. It was some years later that the agents of Wells-Fargo, who had been on their trail for quite a time, managed to find Bronco Bill and Kid Johnson holed up in a cave in the vicinity of Springerville, Arizona. They had been spending their loot having wild parties and soon word leaked out to the Wells-Fargo that these men were wanted for the Belen train robbery.

The Wells-Fargo detectives closed in on the cave and, in the ensuing gun battle, Kid Johnson was killed and Bronco Bill badly wounded with a pullet that pierced his elbow and lodged in the shoulder area.

Bronco Bill finally recovered enough after his capture to stand trial for the train robbery and was convicted of the crime. He was sent to the State Penitentiary at Santa Fe, where he served some time. After his release from the penitentiary, he obtained work on a ranch in the southwestern part of the state. One day as he was working on a windmill, he accidentally fell off and was killed, which was indeed an ironic end for one of the most feared desperadoes in the annals of the history of New Mexico.

A Spanish ballad ("corrido"), was composed, telling the story in verse, by Amalia Tafoya of Belen.

## HIGH NOON - 1904

The only bank robbery in the history of Belen occurred at noon on Friday, January 15, 1904, with the bandits mak-



ing off with an estimated \$2,500.

The robbers fled on horseback toward the Ladrona Mountains southwest of Belen, while a posse of 50 heavily armed men was quickly organized mounted horses and sped after the fugitives.

Sheriff Carlos Baca was telephoned at Los Lunas and some three hours later arrived in Belen and joined the chase.

Cashier Al Frost was alone in the National Bank of Belen, when two strangers, one tall and the other of moderate height, entered . . . just as the banker was about to leave for dinner.

Upon demand for money, Frost grabbed for his own gun in a handy place on the counter. But he had no time to use it, according to an account of the robbery in the issue of the Albuquerque Daily Citizen, dated January 15, 1904.

The bandits promptly covered Frost with their guns and demanded that he hand over his revolver on pain of being perforated with bullets. Cashier Frost complied with the demand.

The posse later divided up into half a dozen squads. A. J. Jordan and four men were reported hot on the trail.

The Citizen said the robbery was carefully planned and most skillfully carried out . . . at an opportune moment, when a majority of the people in the vicinity of the bank had just gone to dinner.

There were rumors that the robbers numbered four and that they took \$16,000, but these rumors were later proven false.

The Belen institution had been established only a year before during the boom railroad days of the "cut-off" town, and Al Frost had been installed as manager and cashier.



## CHAPTER XXVI

### 1856 WILL

A will left by a Belen woman in 1856 reveals the economic conditions and moral integrity of the times.

Listed in her estate were, among many items, an empty bottle, two cups, one tin tablespoon, one china plate, one metal pot, one string of chili, four pillows, a trunk with hinges, two woolen mattresses, four bed covers and a bed sheet.

And to pay off debts up to \$17, she left three children as wards of her three creditors . . . in a form of servitude.

The Last Will and Testament of Maria Isabel Tafoya is dated the Second Day of December, 1856.

The existing economic conditions are particularly revealed in itemizing a bottle in her estate. It is equally significant as to the scarcity of bottles and also the other small items of household which would be considered quite of little or insignificant value today, yet they were very precious items in the household at that time.

Important significance is also attached to the moral integrity which marked the times. Maria Isabel had certain debts which she knew that she was unable to pay lying on her death bed; however, in order that she would not leave this world without meeting these legal or moral obligations, she left all of her children "conprendidos", or in a form of servitude to her creditors as assurance that these debts would be paid in full.

It may also be noted that after the signature of the maker of the will, as well as the attesting witnesses, there appear certain marks which are known as the "rubrica". In addition to the signature, certain individual symbols were added to this signature to prevent the forging of same. This rubrica was a very common practice in New Mexico and practically all old documents contained, in ad-



dition to the signature of the parties, his individual brand or rubrica.

Maria Isabel Tafoya states in her Last Will and Testament that her husband was Nicolas Lain. In the book, "Origins of New Mexico Families," by Fray Angelico Chavez, Nicolas Lain is identified as the son of Joaquin Lain Herberos married to Josefa Tafoya. It gives the names of all of the children, including Jose Nicolas Lain, being born December 9, 1798. When the first wife of Joaquin died, he married Maria Micaela Sanchez, daughter of Diego Antonio Sanchez and Ana Maria Albarez del Castillo. On this occasion, Joaquin gave Spain as the country of his birth.

It may also be noted that Nestor Jaramillo, one of the witnesses to the will of Maria Isabel Tafoya, is the grandfather of Henry Jaramillo, Sr., and Don Jose Jaramillo, who was mentioned in the will, is apparently the father of the said Nestor Jaramillo.

The Last Will and Testament of Maria Isabel Tafoya is reproduced intact for its historic value:

### Holy and Pure Virgin Mary

In the Name of the Father and of the Eternal Virgin Mary, I, Maria Isabel Tafoya, finding myself in the present condition, sick and in bed but of sound judgment, understanding and memory, believing as I do in the incarnation of the Divine Spirit, in the holy mystery of the Divine Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, three distinct persons and one Almighty God, and believing in all the other holy mysteries that are embodied in the doctrine of the Holy Catholic Church and calling on my interceder, the patriarch St. Jose, the Holy Virgin Mary, and all the Saints of the celestial heaven, my body I leave in the earth and my soul I give to my God from whence it came.

I direct that after my death my body be buried with the shroud that my children are able to prepare for me. My body shall be buried in the cemetery.



I also state that I was properly courted and married with Nicolas Lain in this parish of Our Lady of Belen. I also state that I was married about 25 years from which matrimony there were born four children, to-wit: Maria Lain, Francisco Lain, Ana Maria Lain and Dolores Lain. The two girls are married.

I also state that later I had three children, Maria Amada, Pedro Jose and Maria del Refugio. I also state that I have seven children, my heirs, whom I have mentioned above.

I also declare that when my husband died, nothing remained of all that we earned since all our property was used to pay off obligations incurred by him.

I also state that I own two adobe rooms — one room thatched and the other unthatched — with drainage of same to the front, and a mattress covered with bleached cotton cloth.

I also state that I have a woolen mattress. I also state that I have a thick blanket and one quilt-patch, and a handmade rug. I also have four bed covers and a bed sheet. I also have four pillows; also one trunk with hinges. I also state that I have a wooden St. Anthony with two wooden crosses (San Antonio de retablo). I also have three flannel skirts, two undershirts, one other skirt and two hoop skirts; also a cloth cover and one pair of new boots. I also have one bottle, two cups, one tin tablespoon, one china plate, one bedstead, one goatskin, one tin light shade, one metal pot, one metal plow, one tin cooking pan and one metate for grinding corn, one clay tub, two small cheeses, about seven bags of corn, one string of chile, one almur (measure of beans). I also state that this room where we are at present belongs one-half to Francisco and the other half to Ana Maria who purchased same.



I also state I owe Thomas Trujillo dos reales (about 25 cents). I owe Pablo Aragon two strings of chile and one bag of corn to Rumaldo Chavez. I also state that Ana Marie owes me 2 reales; Pedro Trujillo, 1 real; Dolores Belasquez, 1 real.

I also state that I leave my daughter, Maria, one cloth cover, one quiltpatch blanket and the rug. I leave to Ana Maria, my daughter, one trunk.

I also state that my daughter, Amada, I leave as a ward of Don Jose Francisco Sanchez. I owe him a debt, the exact sum I do not know, and I petition my brother, Don Jose Jaramillo, to pay this debt and to take her as his own daughter and that he educate her to the best of his ability. I also state that my son, Pedro Jose, I leave as a ward of my brother, Don Jose Dionicio Tafoya, and that I owe him \$17.00, which I ask Don Jose Chavez Ballejos to pay this debt, and that he take him as his son and that he educate him to the best of his ability. I also state that Jose Dolores, my son, I leave as a ward of Don Antonio Padilla and that I owe him a certain sum, the exact amount I do not know I, therefore, ask that Don Thomas Trujillo, my nephew, that he pay this debt and that he take him as his son and that if he cannot pay the debt, then this child is to remain with his lord until he shall have paid out the indebtedness, at which time he shall return to a free status. I also state that the executors of this my Last Will and Testament are Don Jose Chavez Ballejos and Don Juan Domingo Balencia. I also state that Maria del Refugio, my daughter, I leave with my other daughter, Maria Lain. I hereby finally state that the above instrument has been prepared as my Last Will and Testament with the witnesses this 2nd day of December, 1856.

s/ Maria Isabel Tafoya



Witness No. 1

s/ Jose Francisco Montoya

Witness No. 2

s/ Nestor Jaramillo

Note: The clause under which I award Maria Amada to my brother, Jose Jaramillo, is hereby revoked and annulled and voided and instead I hereby leave my daughter with Jose Francisco Sanchez under the condition that the debt as stated in the account books of said Jose Francisco Sanchez be paid off.

Dated this 6th day of December, 1856, at Belen.

Witness No. 1

s/ Jose Francisco Montoya

Witness No. 2

s/



10924

Plaza V. de Albuquerque.

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## APPENDIX

### 1790 CENSUS — ALBUQUERQUE

Manuel Arteaga, Alcalde Mayor (Chief Alcalde) of the Rio Abajo, listed in the 1790 census of Albuquerque as a resident of the Pueblo of Isleta. The civil and religious administration headquarters was located at Isleta for the entire Rio Abajo area, where the friendly Isleta Indians offered protection against hostile Comanches and Apaches. The 1790 census of Albuquerque lists 248 households in the seven plazas. The occupations of the local residents, who were Spanish, Mestizo, Coyote and Genizaro, are listed as farmers, weavers, spinners of thread, shoemakers, sheepherders, etc.

Opposite is a portion of page 1 of the 1790 census of the Town of Albuquerque. Each household is listed by separate number.



## 1790 CENSUS — LOS CHAVEZ AND BELEN

The town of Los Chavez was divided into six plazas in 1790. A list of the persons residing in the sixth plaza, together with the commandante, who is the first person appearing in the census, is set out in the attached list.

Also in the same census, listed in numerical order, are the six plazas of Belen — the second plaza being Baca Town since most of the families residing in this plaza were descendants of the original families of Baltazar Baca and other Bacas that settled here in the early 1700's.

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### 1790 OFFICIAL CENSUS OF TOWN OF BELEN AND OUTLYING SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES AS CONTAINED IN CENSUS REPORT TRANSMITTED TO THE SPANISH GOVERNOR IN SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

The census is taken on a family basis containing all individuals in the household, name, nationality or race, occupation, age, wife, number of children and ages, servants (in most cases, domesticated Indians).

After each name is given the nationality as follows:

S—Spanish

M—Mestizo (mixture of Spanish and Indian)

C—Coyote

G—Genizaro

#### Plaza (Town) 6a of Los Chaves

- 713 Commandante (Mayor and Officer in Charge)  
Jose Francisco Pino, S., rancher, 30 years of age, married to Juanna Maria Baca, S., 25 years of age; 1 daughter, 2 years of age; a sister, S., 22 years of age; a servant, C., widow, 31 years of age who has 3 single boys of following ages: 14 years, 11 years and 8 years;



a daughter, 5 months; 1 Indian female belonging to the Apache race, 6 years.

- 714 Juan Antonio Baca, S., farmer, 19 years of age, married to Maria Jacinta Chaves, S., 17 years.
- 715 Francisco Chavez, S., rancher, 57 years, married to Maria Josefa Romero, S., 32 years, 3 single sons, 22 years, 13 years and 8 years, also 4 daughters, 25 years old, 5 years, 2 years and 7 months.
- 716 Balthasar Chaves, S., weaver, 27 years, married to Maria Romero, S., 21 years of age, 4 sons, 5 years, 3 years, 2 years, 1 year, Indian servant, 11 years.
- 717 Juachin Pino, S., weaver, 29 years, married to Maria De La Luz Chaves, S., 29 years, 3 sons, 6 years, 4 years, 2 years, 1 daughter, 8 years.
- 718 Benito Peralta, M., weaver, 33 years, married to Rosalia Romero, S., 25 years, 1 son, 4 years, 1 daughter, 8 years.
- 719 Juachin Velasques, M., carpenter, 43 years, married to Maria Guadalupe Chaves, S., 33 years, 4 sons, 13 years, 11 years, 6 years, 2 years, 2 daughters, 8 years, 5 years.
- 720 Antonio Velasquez, M., farmer, 31 years, married to Maria Pasquala Gonzales, M., 25 years, one son, 3 years, one daughter, 6 years.
- 721 Gregorio Venavides, S., retired, 70 years, married to Maria Gertrudes Garcia, 30 years, 2 sons, 12 years, 11 years, 1 daughter, 1 year.

Not legible — 3 names

- 725 (first name not legible) Alderete, S., shepherd, 31



years, married to Anna Maria Gonzales, S., 23 years of age, 2 sons, 8 year, 3 years, 1 daughter, 7 months.

**Plaza (Town) No. 1, Belen**

- 726 Don Diego Antonio Sanchez, S., rancher, 54 years, married to Anna Maria Albarez del Castillo, S., 51 years, 1 son (not legible), 1 daughter, 17, a grandson, S., 10 years, 1 orphan Indian, 16 years, one orphan Indian girl, 14 years, 1 Indian servant, 15 years, and another one belonging to the Apache race, 10 years.
- 727 Mariano Aragon, S., farmer, 23 years, married to Marita Antonia Sanchez, S., 23 years, 1 son, 6 months, 2 daughters, 10 years, 8 years.
- 728 Antonio Joe Sanchez, S., farmer, 22 years, married to Maria Concepcio Padilla, S., 16 years.
- 729 Bernard Barreras, M., absent, 40 years, married to Maria (not legible) Gallegos, M., 26 years old.

**Plaza No. 2, Belen**

- 730 Commandante (Mayor and Officer in Charge)  
Don Miguel Antonio Baca., S., rancher, 47 years, married to Juanna Maria Baca, S., 37 years, 1 son, 6 years, not legible) 1 Indian girl servant of Apache race, 21 years old and 1 girl Indian servant, orphan, 15 years, 1 man servant, Indian, 50 years.
- 731 Juan Miguel Baca, S., farmer, 22 years, married to Marita Garcia, S., 21 years.
- 732 Juachin Castillo, S., rancher, 49 years, married to Anna Maria Andrea Vallejos, S., 27 years, 2 sons, 10 years, 3 years, 1 male Indian servant, 11 years, belonging to the Apache nation.
- 733 Jose Mariano Trujillo, M., farmer, 27 years, married to Maria de la Luz Silva, M., 19 years, 1 son, 2 months,



1 M., female, 50 years, single.

- 734 Pedro Ignacio Barreras, M., shepherd, 46 years, married to Maria de la Luz Anaya, M., 51 years, 3 sons, 21 years, 14 years and 13 years.
- 735 Dionisio Trujillo, M., blacksmith, 51 years, Maria Anna Luzero, M., 41, 4 sons, 21 years, 13 years, 11 years, 6 years.
- 736 Maria Rosa Luzero M., 43 years, widow, 2 sons, 15 years, 14 years.
- 737 Augustin Trujillo, M., blacksmith, 29 years of age, married to Lucia Montano, S., 18 years, 2 sons, 3 years and 2 years, a nephew, Indian, 15 years.
- 738 Blas Trujillo, M., blacksmith, 19 years, married to Maria Guadalupe Pino, S., 16 years.
- 739 Juachin Aragon, S., farmer, 30 years, married to Barbara Trujillo, M., 18, 2 sons, 4 years, 2 years.
- 740 Maria Francisca Baca, S., 51 years, 2 sons, 31 and 30.
- 741 Tomas Aragon, S., farmer, 25 years, married to Gregoria Chavez, S., 28 years, 1 son, 2 months.
- 742 Manuel Mancheso, M., weaver, 69 years, married to Rosa Miranda, Indian, 42 years, 2 sons, 20 years, 13 years, 4 daughters, 16 years, 6 years, 4 years, 2 years.
- 743 Rafaela Baca, S., widow, 53 years, a nephew, S., 16 years, a niece, S., 11 years, 1 Indian female servant, 31 years, single, 2 single sons, 8 years, 3 years.
- 744 Lucas Antonio Baca, S., rancher, 31 years, married to Maria Paula Chaves, S., 29 years of age, 3 daughters, 9 years, 7 years, 3 months, 1 (female servant, C.,



- 13 years, 1 male servant, 27 years, married to Juana Barreras, G., 20 years, 1 son, 2 years.
- 745 Dionisio Antonio Baca, S., farmer, 29 years, married to Anna Marie Sanches, S., 21 years, 1 son, 2 years, 1 daughter, 3 years.
- 746 Paulino Baca, S., farmer, 35, married to Lugarda Taffolla, S., 31 years, 4 sons, 9 years, 7 years, 5 years, 3 years 1 daughter, 5 months.
- 747 Nerio Baca, C., disabled, 57 years, married to Maria Pasquala Silva, C., 47 years, 1 daughter, 27 years.
- 748 Juan Francisco Padilla, M., farmer, 30 years of age, married to Anna Maria Aragon, S., 29 years, 1 son, 4 years, 2 daughters, 6 years, 3 years.
- 749 Juachin (not legible) M., farmer, 60 years, married to Juana Maria Duran, S., 47 years, 4 sons, 15 years, 13 years, 7 years, 6 years, 2 daughters, 4 year, 3 years.
- 750 Agustina Silva, S., 46 years, widow, 6 sons, S., 21 years, 14 years, 13 years, 12 years, 10 years, 7 years, 1 daughter, 8 years.
- 751 Isidro Baca, C., wool carder, 49 years, married to Antonia Zumiana, M., 46 years, 6 sons, 19 years, 15 years, 13 years, 6 years, 3 years, 5 years.
- 752 Maria Rivera, M., 40 years, single, a sister, single, 33 years, M., a daughter, 7 years, 2 Indian nieces, 16 and 7 years.
- 753 Luis Rivera, farmer, 26 years, married to Maria de los Dolores Baca, M., 27 years, 2 daughters, 3 years, 6 months.
- 754 Juan Domingo Padilla, S., farmer, 51 years, married



to Juana Rita Baca, S., 36 years, 6 sons, 18 years, 16 years, 14 years, 12 years, 10 years, 4 years, 2 daughters, 7 years, 1 year.

- 755 Jose Baca, S., silversmith, 52 years of age, married to Lugarda Torres, S., 40 years, 4 sons, 22 years, 16 years, 9 years, 10 years, 2 daughters, 14 years, 6 years.
- 756 Juan Piro Torres, C., laborer, 33 years, married to Augustina Luzero, M., 29 years, 1 sister, single, 36 years, M., 3 sons, 11 years, 3 years, 1 year.
- 757 Juan Miguel Chaves, S., weaver, absent, 61 years, married to Viaber Montano, S., 46 years, 4 sons, 20 years, 19 years, 15 years, 14 years, 1 daughter, 3 years.
- 758 Pedro Baca, G., farmer, 27 years, married to (not legible) Gonzales, 20 years, 1 son, 2 years, 1 daughter, 4 years.
- 759 Venancio Baca, G., wool carder, 48 years, married to Michaela Baca, G., 41 years, a daughter, 8 years.
- 760 Jose Antonio Padilla, S., rancher, 39 years, married to Josefa Torres, S., 41 years, 1 C. male servant, 8 years, 1 female servant, Indian, 18 years.
- 761 Esmerijildo Baca, S., blacksmith, 47 years, married to Maria de Los Reyes Padilla, S., 35 years, 1 son, 6 years, 4 daughters, 10 years, 8 years, 7 years, 1 year.
- 762 Gregorio Varela, S., carpenter, 55 years, married to Maria Torres, S., 39 years, 2 sons, 22 years and 17 years, 4 daughters, 25 years, 13 years, 9 years and 5 years.
- 763 Bernardo Lucero, M., carpenter, 67 years, married to Brianda Chaves, C., 61 years of age, 1 son, 41, a grand-



son, 10 years, a niece, 12 years.

- 764 Juan de Luna, S., weaver, 37 years, married to Maria (not legible) Garcia, S., 27 years, 4 sons, 9 years, 6 years, 4 years, and 2 years.
- 765 Mariano de Luna, S., farmer, 25 years of age, married to Barbara Aragon, S., 16 years.
- 766 Barbara Yturricia, S., widow, five sons, 31 years, 27 years, 21 years, 19 years, 13 years, one Indian female servant of A. Ynties nation, 38 years, one daughter, M., 5 months.
- 767 Jose Torres, S., farmer, 33 years, married to Mariaita de Luna, S., 29 years, 3 sons, 8 years, 6 years, 3 years, 1 daughter, 4 months.
- 768 Jose Montano, S., farmer, 27 years of age, married to Maria Guadalupe Silva, S., 21, 1 son, 6 years.
- 769 Eduarda Varela, S., 51 years, widow, 2 sons, 16 years, 10 years.
- 770 Nicolas Montano S., farmer, 33 years, married to Maria Catharina Baca, S., 19 years.
- 771 Domingo Montano, S., farmer, 26 years of age, married to Anna Maria Silva, M., 27 years, one daughter, 6 years.
- 772 Francisco Silva, C., laborer, 38 years, married to Manuela Chaves, S., 29 years of age, 2 sons, 6 years, 4 years, 1 daughter, 11 years, 1 daughter, 7 years, 1 daughter 1 year.
- 773 Juan Jose Baca, S., rancher, 25 years, married to Maryta Chaves, S., 21 years, 1 son, 6 years.



- 774 Juan Dionisio Baca, S., rancher, 27 years, married to Marita Rita Pino, S., 21 years, 1 son, 2 years, 1 sister, S., 17 years, 1 servant of Yuta nation, 11 years.
- 775 Juan Domingo Torres, S., rancher, 44 years, married to Rita Garcia, S., 39 years, 4 sons, 21 years, 15 years, 8 years, 6 years, 1 daughter, 10 years.
- 776 Bartholo Pino S., rancher, 33 years, married to Antonia (not legible) Torres, S., 16 years.
- 777 Jose Garcia, S., farmer, 58 years, married to Griselda Gutierrez, S., 44, 1 son, 16 years.

**Plaza 3 of Belen  
of Our Lady of Los Dolores of the Genizaros**

- 778 Commandante (Mayor and Officer in Charge)  
Marcos Velasquez, M., shoemaker, 51 years of age, married to Maria Rosa Baca, M., 29 years of age, 1 daughter, 16 years.
- 779 Marcos Gongora, Indian belonging to the pueblo of Socorro of El Paso, farmer, 30 years, married to Maria Victoria Manzanares, G., 49 years, 1 son, 9 years, 2 daughters, 16 years and 6 years.
- 780 Luz Cisneros, Indian belonging to the pueblo of Socorro of El Paso, farmer, married to Antonia Dolores Manzanares, G., 31 years, 1 son, 13 years, 2 daughters, twins, 9 years.
- 781 Augustin Gonzales, G., farmer, 27 years, married to Maria de la Luz Baca, 21 years.
- 782 Salvador Serna, G., vagabond, 33 years, married to Maria Antonia Gabaldon, M., 33, 1 son, 15 years, 1 daughter, 13 years.



- 783 Juan Blas Tiburcio, G., 33 years, farmer, married to Anna Maria Silva, M., 29 years, 1 daughter, 5 years.
- 784 Maria Lasauna Romero, G., 46 years, widow.
- 785 Jose Maria Manuel Gurule, G., farmer, 61 years, married to Maria Josefa Baca, M., 37 years, 2 sons, 17 years, 10 years, 2 daughters, 15 years and 9 years, 1 nephew, 1 year.
- 786 Maria Pha Romero, G., 41 years, widow, 1 son, 6 years, 1 daughter, 7 years.
- 787 Ysidro Pena, Indian belonging to the pueblo nation of El Paso, farmer, 51 years, married to Marta Trujillo, M., 71 years, 1 daughter, 20 years, nephew, 8 years, M., a niece, M., 6 years.
- 788 Pedro Pena, M., farmer, 26 years, married to Marta Sedillo, S., 21 years, 1 daughter, 2 years.
- 789 Manuel Velasquez, M., farmer, 29 years, married to Maryta Griego, S., 26 years, 1 son, 2 years, 1 daughter, 7 years.
- 790 Juachin Sanches, G., farmer, 31 years, married to Maria Antonio Romero, G., 21 years, 1 son, 4 years, 1 daughter, 1 year.
- 791 Juan Andres (not legible), G., farmer, 36 years, married to Andrea Marquez, G., 26 years, 1 son (not legible).
- 792 (Not legible)
- 793 Jose Trujillo, G., vagabond, 57 years, married to Manuela Velasquez, M., 41 years of age, 2 sons, 21 years and 18 years.



- 794 Santiago Torres, G., shepherd, 38 years, married to Barbara Trujillo, M., 28 years years of age, 2 sons, 6 years and 1 year, 2 daughters, 5 years and 7 years.
- 795 Santiago Bernal, G., laborer, 38 years, married to Maria Ines Garcia, G., 27 years.
- 796 Tomas Padilla, G., farmer, 23 years, married to Maria Soledad Romero, G., 21 years, 2 daughters (not legible).
- 797 Francisco Chaves, S., farmer, single, 35 years, 3 brothers, 24 years, 17 years, 12 years, 1 sister widow, S., 27 years, 1 daughter, 7 years.
- 798 Feliciano Romero, C., weaver, 50 years, widower, 1 son, 18 years, 1 daughter (not legible).
- 799 Marhias Torres, S., weaver, 40 years, married to Maria Antonio Sedillo, S., 26 years, 4 sons, 10 years, 6 years 4 years, 2 years, 4 daughters, 11 years, 9 years, 5 years 1 year, sister, S., 13 years.
- 800 Pedro Leon Molina, G., 38 years, farmer, widower, 1 sister, G., widow, 40 years, 2 daughters, 6 years, 4 years.
- 801 Marhias Montano, Indian of Navajo tribe, wool carder, 49 years, married to Maria Silva G., 50 years, 1 son, 3 years.
- 802 Xavier Velasquez, M., farmer, 31 years of age, married to Maria Josefa Marquez, S., 34 years of age, 2 sons, 5 years and 2 years, 1 sister, 8 years, 1 sister, 22 years, 1 nephew, 3 years, all mestizos.
- 803 Juan Christoval de Jesus Velasquez, M., farmer, 21 years, married to Maria Griego, S., 16 years.



- 804 Jose Antonio Gonzales, G., wool carder, 61 years, married to Michaela Tafolla, G., 36 years, 1 niece.
- 805 Antonio Trujillo M., farmer, 38 years, married to Maria Torres, S., 30 years, 1 daughter, 7 years.
- 806 Maryta Silva, G., widow, 36 years, 1 son, 8 years, 1 daughter, 16 years.
- 807 Santiago Candelaria, M., laborer, 28 years, married to Maria Dolores Trujillo, M., 21 years, 2 daughters, 8 years and 6 years, her mother, Maria Trujillo, M., widow 66 years.
- 808 Juan Andres Cachilla, Indian of the Socorro del Passo Tribe, farmer, 43 years, married to Juana Maria Hurtado, M., 37 years, 2 sons, 13 years, 4 years, 2 daughters, 6 years, 6 months.
- 809 Francisco Pablo Hurtado, M., farmer, 28 years, married to Maria Pasqualita Romero.
- 810 Maria Luisa Hurtado, G., 53 years, widow, a nephew, 9 years.
- 811 Juan Francisco Sabedra, M., farmer, 19 years, married to Antonia Lucia Hurtado, M., 21 years, the mother, Antonia Hurtado, G., widow, 60 years.
- 812 Juan Jose Hurtado, M., farmer, 34 years, married to Maria Simona Chaves M., 16 years, 2 daughters, 2 years, 6 months, the mother, 38 years, single, 2 daughters, 20 years, 3 years.

**Plaza 4th San Antonio De Los Trujillos of Belen**

- 813 Lieutenant Don Santiago Trujillo, S., rancher, 51 years, married to (not legible) Chaves, S., 49 years, 2 sons, 18 years and 16 years, 11 years, 9 years, 5 years,



4 months, 4 daughters, 14 years, 12 years, 7 years, 3 years, one Indian servant, 16 years.

- 814 Don Nicolas Torres, S., farmer, 58 years, married to Francisca Padilla, S., (not eligible), 5 sons, 25 years, 23 years, 16 years, 14 years, 6 years, 2 daughters, 16 years, 8 years, one female Indian, single, a son 2 years.
- 815 Jose Marheo Barreras, S., musician, 23 years, married to Juana Tome Gonzales, S., 19 years, 1 daughter, 1 year.
- 816 Jose Barreras, S., sheepherder, 53 years, married to Maria Dolores Quintana, S., 46 years, a daughter, 16 years.
- 817 Pedro Antonio Silva, S., rancher, 25 years, married to Barbara Trujillo, S., 23 years, 2 sons, 5 years, 7 months, 3 years.
- 818 Jose Antonio Montoya, S., weaver, 41 years, married to Maria Rosa Trujillo (not legible), a daughter, 16 years, a nephew, 5 years.
- 819 Jose (not legible) Barreras, S., farmer, 29 years, married to (not legible) Chaves, 20 years, 1 son, 2 years, one Indian female servant, C., 17 years.
- 820 Juan Cruz Trujillo, S., farmer, 37 years, married to Anna Maria Gonzales, S., 31 years, 3 sons, 16 years, 12 years and 4 years, 3 daughters, 14 years, 7 years and 6 years.
- 821 Jose Gregorio Chaves, S., farmer, 26 years, married to Maria Genoveva Manchego, M., 27 years, 1 son, 9 months.



### Plaza of Our Savior of Pilar of Belen 5th

- 822 Commandante (Mayor or Officer in Charge)  
Juachin Torres, S., rancher, 50 years, married to Isabel Chaves, S., 36 years, 3 sons, 19 years, 11 years, 7 years, a daughter, 17 years, 2 Indian female servants, 51 years, 18 years, an orphan male, 10 years (not legible).
- 823 Xavier Garcia, S., rancher, 31 years, married to Josefa Sanchez, 30 years, 2 daughters, 6 years and 2 years, 3 daughters, 4 years, 12 years, 11 months, 1 servant, S., female, 23 years.
- 824 Toribio Garcia, S., weaver, 57 years, married to Brigidita Vallejos, S., 60 years, 2 nephews, S., 16 years, 15 years, a niece, S., 15 years, a female Indian servant, 20 years.
- 825 Pablo Garcia, S., rancher, 38 years, married to Michaela Baca, S., 29 years, 2 sons, 8 years, 4 years, 1 daughter, 15 years, a sister, S., 25 years.
- 826 Estevan Garcia, S., rancher, wool carder, 36, married to Teresa Sanches, S., 26 years, 1 son, 10 years, 2 daughters, 7 years, 5 years, a female servant, C., 39 years, 2 sons, 8 years, 7 years, a daughter, 4 years.
- 827 Feliciano Montoya, S., weaver, 43 years, married to Maria Trinidad Garcia, S., 30 years, 4 daughters, 14 years, 12 years, 6 years and 3 years, a female Indian servant, 12 years, a female servant belonging to Apache tribe, 17 years.
- 828 Pedro Francisco Silva, S., farmer, 27 years, married to Magdalena Baca, C., 39 years, 2 sons, 6 years and 6 months.
- 830 Juan Molina, S., farmer, 41 years, married to Maria



- Concepcion Sanches, S., 26 years, 4 sons, 15 years, 13 years, 11 years, 8 years, a daughter, 3 years.
- 831 Santiago Fajardo, S., 35 years, married to Maria Barbara Salas, S., 21 years, a son, 3 years, 2 daughters, 5 years and 2 years.
- 832 Santiago Silva, Indian, sheepherder, 40 years, married to Maria (not legible) Baca, Indian, 36 years, a son, 20 years, a daughter, 15 years.
- 833 Jacinto Varela, S., farmer, 26 years, married Ursula Ulibarri, S., 17 years, a daughter, 6 months.
- 834 Francisco Varela, S., sheepherder, 60 years, married to Pasquala Cordova, M., 51 years, a son, 22 years, a daughter, 31.
- 835 Jose Silva, S., farmer, 32 years, married to Maria Gertrudes Montoya, S., 29 years.
- 836 Blas Velasquez, S., farmer, 27 years, married to Maria de la Luz Varela, S., 19 years.
- 837 Francisco Rosas (Mulato), native of El Parral, farmer, 31 years, married to Juana Maria Baca, M., 51 years, a daughter, 15 years.
- 838 Jose Chaves, S., farmer, 57 years, married to Juana Maria Baca, S., 50 years, 3 sons, 29 years, 23 years, 17 years, a daughter, 11 years, an Indian servant, 17 years, a servant, coyota, 12 years, another Indian, single, 17 years, a daughter, 3 months.
- 839 Jose Marian Arroyos, S., tailor, 46 years, married to Maria Gertrudes Chaves, M., 36 years, 2 sons, 21 years, 6 years, 4 daughters, 14 years, 8 years, 3 years, 2 years.



- 840 Andres Torres, S., rancher, 49 years, married to Maria Concepcion Padilla, S., 31 years, 3 sons, 8 years, 6 years, 4 years, a servant, S., 6 years, a servant (female) S., 27 years, an Indian female, belonging to the Apache nation, 8 years.
- 841 Jose Carrillo, farmer, 53 years, married (not legible) to Barreras, S., 41 years of age, a daughter, 23 years.
- 842 Antonio Carrillo, S., farmer, 24 years, married to Maria (not legible) Mirabal, S., 13 years.
- 843 Lucas Baca., C., un-employed, 65 years, widower.
- 844 Juan Antonio Baca, M., farmer, 23 years, married to Maria Laragoza Trujillo, M., 30 years, 2 sons, 3 years, 3 months.
- 845 Santiago Romero, M., farmer, 39 years, married to Perna Rivas, S., 25 years, 2 sons, 16 years, 12 years, 2 daughters, 6 years, 4 years.
- 846 Juan Jose Castillo, M., farmer, 20 years, married to Maria de la Lus Rael, S., 19 years.
- 847 Juachin Fajardo, S., farmer, 26 years, married to Maria Rosa Torres, S., 31 years.
- 848 Maria Chaves, S., 69 years, widow, a nephew, 29 years, S., a niece, 13 years, S.
- 849 Juan Antonio Fajardo, S., farmer, 29 years, married to Dominga Armijo, S., 22 years, a son, 7 years, 2 daughters, 4 years and 2 years.
- 850 Maria Escovedo, S., 49 years, widow, 2 daughters, 18 years, 15 years.
- 851 Maria Rosa Atencio, S., 59 years, widow, 3 sons, 36



years, 21 years, (not legible).

- 852 Marcelo Candelaria, S., blind, beggar, 50 years, married to Maria Yndora Marrin, M., 37 years, 1 son, 9 years, a daughter, 18 years, a sister, M., 24 years.

#### **Plaza of Our Lord of Los Jarales, 6 of Belen**

- 853 Commandante (Mayor and Officer in Charge)  
Jose Garcia, S., farmer, 60 years, originally from Sonora, married to Barbara Dolores Cruz, M., 39 years, 3 sons, 21 years, 10 years, 3 years, 4 daughters, 10 years, 9 years, 6 years, 4 years, and a nephew, M., 10 years.
- 854 Pedro Garcia, S., farmer, 36 years, married to Anna Gregoria Chaves, S., 33 years, 1 son (not legible), 2 daughters, 11 years, and another 8 years.
- 855 Jose Antonio Galindo, M., farmer, 36 years, married to Maria Philomena Baca, D., 41 years, 2 sons, 12 years, 7 years, 2 daughters, 5 years, 4 years, 2 brothers, M., 23 years, 20 years, a sister, 25 years, a niece, M., 2 sons, 5 years, 4 years, and a daughter, 1 year.
- 856 Jose Antonio Olguin, S., farmer, 33 years, married to Maria Estefana Trujillo, S., 36 years, 3 sons, 11 years, 4 years, 8 months.

#### **Plaza of San Antonio of Sabinal**

- 857 Commandante (Mayor and Officer in Charge)  
Francisco Suaso, S., native of El Paso, farmer, 40 years, married to Anna Gregoria Torres, S., 46 years.
- 858 Maria Luisa Alderrete, S., widow, 41 years, 2 sons, 9 years, and 3 years, a daughter, 5 years.



- 859 Marhias Alderrete, S., blacksmith, 62 years, married to Maria Jaramillo, S., 57 years.
- 860 Juan Cristobal Silva, M., shepherd, widower, 46 years.
- 861 Francisco LaLange (or Falande), S., weaver, 46 years, married to Francisca Montoya, 34 years, a son, 8 years, 3 daughters, 13 years, 9 years and 5 years.
- 862 Jose Gregorio Griego, farmer, 36 years, married to Maria Rita Fajardo.
- 863 Juan Domingo Sanchez, C., adobe wall builder, 43 years, married to Simona Chaves, C., 37, 4 sons, 17 years, 14 years, 4 years, (not legible), 4 daughters, 11 years, 7 years, 6 years, 5 years.
- 864 Antonio Lucero Torres, S., farmer, 44 years, married to Maria (not legible) Alderrete, S., 37 years, 3 daughters, 9 years, 5 years, 1 year.
- 865 Juan Antonio Garcia, S., farmer, 49 years, married to Antonia Rita Chaves, S., 31 years, 3 sons, 18 years, 16 years, 10 years, 2 daughters, 7 years, 4 months.
- 866 Maria Leonarda Salazar, S., 31 years, widow, 2 sons, 8 years, 6 years, a daughter, 6 years.
- 867 Francisco Pablo Salazar, S., farmer, 70 years, widower, a nephew, S., 9 years.
- 867 Jose Manuel Ruixel, G., farmer, 27 years, married to Maria Barbara Sanches, C., 21 years, a son, 5 months.
- 868 Lupe Marquez, S., carpenter, 47 years, married to Maria Francisca Sanches, M., 26 years of age, a son, 14 years.



## A P P E N D I X

### Department of Belen

#### MUSTER ROLL - MARCH 29, 1839

On March 29, 1839, the Citizen Justice of the Peace, Juan Cruz Baca, of the Demarcation (Department) of Belen called for a census of all males capable of bearing arms. The reason for this report is not given, but evidently was due to constant Indian incursion. The Demarcation at the time was divided into three Districts, the Plaza of Belen, Zavinal (Sabinal) and Jarales. Those who reported were listed as those with horses, those on foot, and those who had arms (escopetas). This list, taken from the Mexican Archives, 5674, Santa Fe, New Mexico, is as follows:

#### **Plaza of Belen**

Juan Cruz Baca, Justice of the Peace,  
Catalino Tachillas,  
Juan Baca,  
Manuel Garcia,  
Antonio Jose Castillo,  
Jose Artiaga,  
Alejo Jaramillo,

Juan Truxillo,  
    Baca,  
Luis Venavidez,  
Manuel Tachillas,  
Estevan Torres,  
Pedro Lucero,  
Nicolas Lai,  
Jose Maria Vallejos,



Santiago Gurule,  
 Juan Antonio Torres,  
 Antonio Gallegos,  
 Jose Garcia,  
 Jose Gallegos,  
 Rafael Marino,  
 Jose Dario Linaces,  
 Nepomuceno Chavez,  
 Lucas Chavez,  
 Severiano Elise and  
 Jose Garcilla.

Total	6 horsemen
	25 on foot
	9 with arms
	19 with bow and arrow
	26 men

### Plaza of Sausal

Tomas Aragon,  
 Rafael Garcia,  
 Joaquin Garcia,  
 Ignacio Moya,  
 Jose Antonio Chavez,  
 Jose Manuel Chavez,

Jose Antonio Peralta,  
 Fco (Francisco) Maramio,  
 Vicente Chavez,  
 Not legible,  
 Jose Rafael Sanchez,  
 Juan Gallegos,

Jose Alderette,  
 Jose Chavez,  
 Jose Padilla,  
 Juan Jose Sanchez,  
 Juan Vanavidez,  
 Juan Jose Chavez,



Not legible,  
 Juan Jose Sanchez,  
 Juan Venavidez,  
 Pablo Ortega,  
 Pedro Trujillo,  
 Manuel Chavez,

Manuel  
 Jose Trujillo,  
 Julian Baca,  
 Rafael Gurule,  
 Manuel Rael,  
 Jose Antonio Velasquez.

Total	-----	12 horsemen
		91 on foot
		16 with arms.
		36 with bow and arrow
		59 men (This includes previous list)

### Plaza of Jarales

Rafael , Alcalde  
 Diego Pino,  
 Jose Antonio Chavez,  
 Rafael Chavez,  
 Rafael Gallegos,  
 Frco Garcia,  
 Luciano Romero,

Juan Jose Torres,  
 Molina,  
 Ramon Garcia,  
 Lorenzo Torres,  
 Tranquilino Garcia,  
 Moraga (Santiago),

Pantaleon Cilva (Silva),  
 Chavez,



Bartolo Rivera,  
 Francisco Jose Jaramillo,  
 Manuel Casados,  
 Jose Maria Molina,  
 Rafael Cordova,

Juan Chavez,  
 Juan Castillo,  
 Marcos Pacheco,  
 Ysidro Luna,  
 Rafael Montoya,  
 Jose Gurule,  
 Santiago Molina,  
 Julian Gurule.

Total-----	53 horsemen
	79 footmen
	58 with arms
	63 with bow and arrow
	Men 88

**Los Jarales continued:**

Pedro Montolla,  
 Toribio Velasquez,  
 Florencio Garcilla,  
 Joaquin Castillo,  
 Juan Miguel

Jose Manuel Gurule,  
 Rafael Gonzalez,  
 Pedro Galindo,  
 Rafael Tafoya,  
     Dias,  
     Castillo,

    Baca,  
 Arsenio Baca,  
 Juan Chavez,  
 Antonio Gurule,



Visente Chavez,  
Favian Baca.

**Plaza of Los Chavez**

Manuel Sanchez,  
Mariano Velasquez,  
Fr co Pino,  
Vicente (no surname given)  
Juan Baca,  
Dolores Baca,  
Manuel Baca,  
Jose Guadalupe Garcia,  
Hipolito Chavez,  
Guadalupe Jaramillo.

For the following page (pliego)

59 horsemen  
108 on foot  
20 with arms  
92 with bow and arrow  
139 men

**Plaza of Los Chavez, continued:**

Manuel Chavez,  
Pablo Mireles,  
Castor Sanchez,  
Pedro Gomez,  
Juan de Dios Gabaldon,  
Gorgonio Chavez,  
Pedro Samora,  
Juan Chavez.

Total ----- 16 horsemen  
119 footmen  
20 with arms



"The Demarcation of Belen has 80 men capable of bearing arms."

Summary:

16	horsemen
115	on foot
20	with arms
100	bowmen

The record copies form is legible but the spelling is confusing. The sub-totals do not reconcile. Apparently some who are listed with bow and arrow also have escopetas. By actual count the number of men is 123.





1791  
Año: 23

#1151

1791

1791-

Celebro mucho la noticia que me da vñ.  
con fha de 1.º de Julio ultimo relativa al  
ataque que dieron los Isletas a los otzaches  
Naragis que cayeron sobre el Pueblo de  
Tome, cuyo aviso dio el Capitan Tarchelna-  
re que era de paz: apruebo en todas  
su partes las providencias que tomó Vñ  
para que así se verificase, y ramoren  
que depusiere de su Empleo, y castigase  
como merecia al Jefe de aquel Pueblo  
por la omision en que incurrió.

Dios que. a Vñ. m. a. Mexico  
23 de Agosto de 1791.

El Comandante Jefe  
(Signature)

Or. Govern. del  
Reyno de España

Secretaria



## ISLETAS TO THE RESCUE

August 23, 1791

I acknowledge with great pleasure Your Excellency's letter of last July relating to the attack made by the Ysletas on the Natages Apaches who raided the town of Tome, which alarm was given by Capitan Taschelnate who was at peace terms with us. The actions taken by you under the circumstances are approved by me in all respects, and also the removal from his post and that proper punishment be rendered to the lieutenant of that town for the omission that he incurred.

God Save Your Excellency  
Mexico  
23rd of August 1791  
Count Revilla Gigido

Opposite is copy of original letter from Count Gigido.



BELEN LAND GRANT PETITION  
1740

Transscript of original documents relating to the Town of Belen Land Grant. The petition was signed by Captain Diego de Torres, his brother-in-law, Antonio de Salazar, and 31 other settlers.

Petition for Grant. Translation of original records presented to William Pehlman, Surveyor General for New-Mexico on application for a U. S. Patent for confirmation of the Grant.

CLAIM NO. 43

To His Excellency, the Governor and Captain-General: Captain Diego de Torres and Antonio de Salazar, and the other signers hereto, before the greatness of Your Excellency, with the greatest possible submission, state: That, whereas, we have large families and have no convenient lands wherewith to support them and having examined an uncultivated and vacant tract of land at the point of the Rio Abajo and being unappropriated, we register the same and petition for a grant in the royal name of His Majesty (Whom God may preserve) for the purpose of settling thereon, there being suitable lands for cultivation, and such as are not will answer for pasture grounds for our herds and flocks, which we promise to occupy and settle as required by the Royal Ordinances; the boundaries of which are, on the east by the Sandia Mountains and on the west, the Puerco River; on the north on both sides of the river, the boundary is the lands of Nicolas Chavez and those of the adjoining settlers of Our Lady of the Concepcion, tract of Tome; and on the south the place called Phelipe Romero, in a direct line lntil it intersects the boundaries above mentioned from east to west; which Your Excellency being pleased to grant and provide as we request by doing which we will receive grace and favor, and we swear in due form that this, our petition, is not done in malice but for the purpose of overcoming our difficulties.



Captain Diego de Torres	Gabriel Romero
Antonio de Salazar	Maria Vigil
Pedro Vigil	Jose Trujillo
Miguel Salazar	Francisco Martin
Juana Teresa Romero	Nicolas Martiniano
Lugarda Romero	Ignacio Barrera
Juan Antonio Salazar	Juan Domingo Torres
Miguel Salazar	Jose Romero
Pablo Salazar	Jose Tenorio
Nicolas Salazar	Juan Jose Sandoval
Manuel Antonio Trujillo	Francisco Trujillo
Maria Torres	Franco Jiron
Salvador Torres	Cristoval Naranjo
Jose Antonio Torres	Jose Antonio Naranjo
Tadeo Torres	Bartolome Torres
Cayetano Cristobal Torres	Pedro Romero
Barbara Romero	

## ROYAL GRANT

In the Town of Santa Fe, on the 15th day of November, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty, I, the Lieutenant Colonel, Governor and Captain General of the Kingdom of New Mexico, Don Domingo Gaspar de Mendoza, having seen the present petition made by the persons therein referred to, should order, and did order, that a grant be made to them of the tract they ask for, in the name of the King, Our Sovereign, (whom God may preserve) in order that they may settle, cultivate and improve the same for the benefit of themselves, their children, heirs and successors, who may have a better right thereto, without injury to any third party as they promise in their petition. Therefore, I order and direct the Senior Justice of the Town of Albuquerque, Don Nicolas de Chavez, to give them the possession referred to, under the conditions and terms required in such cases; and, there being no doubt of the existence of other royal grants in the vicinity and the deed and title of these who adjoin said lands are required to be presented for the fulfillment of this new grant in order



that it may be divided with more propriety for the purpose of avoiding suits and difficulties at the present time as well as in the future, I deem it proper to conform to the forms which are provided. I have so provided, ordered and signed, with my attending witnesses acting by appointment in the absence of a notary, there being none in this kingdom.

DON GASPAR DOMINGO DE MENDOZA

Antonio de Herrera

Jose Terrus

It is noted in my book of government on file in the Archives of this Capitol on the reverse of page 68.

MENDOZA

Santa Fe. January 25th, 1742.

At the place of Our Lady of Belen, jurisdiction of the Town of Albuquerque, on the Ninth day of the month of December of the year, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty, I, Captain Nicolas Duran de Chavez, Senior Justice and War-Captain of said town and jurisdiction, by virtue of the decree of Lieutenant Colonel Don Gaspar de Mendoza, Governor and Captain General of this kingdom, promulgated on the 15th day of November last past, wherein I am directed to proceed to give royal possession to Captain Diego de Torres as the representative of all the persons mentioned and signed in the foregoing petition, according to the tenor of their petition, a grant is made to them in the name of His Majesty, which decree was published to those adjoining said lands by my order, and there being no objection to the petition, I proceeded to give possession; said lands being bounded on the north by those of Captain Nicolas Duran de Chavez, on the house fronting on the foundation of the house of Phelipe Romero; on the west, the Puerco River, that portion of the opposite of the river of the Purisima Concepcion, and on the east by the Sandia



mountains, and the south by ruins of the foundation of the house of the said aforesaid, Phelipe Romero, and having examined said boundaries with three attending and instrumental witnesses, according to the law I took the aforesaid Torres by the hand and walked with him over the lands and he cried in a loud voice and pulled up grass and threw stones and gave other manifestations which are made and provided in such cases, receiving this possession in the name of His Majesty, quietly and peacefully with the same boundaries contained in his petition; whereupon, I directed perpetual landmarks to be established, giving him said lands free and with general pastures, waters, watering places, timber uses and customs, in order that he, his children, heirs and successors, may enjoy the same without opposition, and the royal possession to be evidence of sufficient title, and by virtue of which he shall enjoy the same aforestated, and, in order that it may so appear, I place it on the record. Bernabe Baca, Baltazar Baca and those in attendance, being instrumental witnesses who signed with me, acting judge, on the present common paper, there being none in these parts.

Before me as acting Judge.

Nicolas de Chavez

Attending:

Jose Miguel Alvarez de Castillo  
Guillermo Saavedra.

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In the Town of Santa Fe, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty-two, I Lieutenant Colonel Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Governor and Captain General of this said Kingdom, by His Majesty, (Whom God may preserve) state, that having informed that several residents, including in this grant, which was made by me, said Lieutenant Colonel, in the name of the King, Our Sovereign, Captain



Diego Torres being their representative, I should and did order that all such persons who have not occupied said grant and tract or who shall not occupy the same within thirty days to be counted from the date hereof, shall be considered as having forfeited their right to the grant and lands to which they have a right had they occupied the same and that the holders of land that are forfeited if they do not comply with what has been ordered, their lands shall be considered as vacant, or they shall be given to such persons as occupy them, in compliance with the royal decrees in reference to the settlement and cultivation of lands; and I have so provided, ordered and signed with those in my attendance, in the customary manner and on the present paper, there being none other that I can certify.

Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza.

Witnesses:

Salvador Manuel Antonio Giole

The above is a true copy of the original on file in the Archives at Santa Fe, in a government book for the year 1740 and upwards on the reverse of page 68.



## LOS CHAVEZ LAND GRANT APPLICATION

The following is the land grant application made by Don Nicolas Duran de Chavez, resident of Atrisco, jurisdiction of Albuquerque. The application is dated in the year 1739 and applies for the lands later known as the Los Chavez or Nicolas Duran de Chavez Grant.

Senor Governor and Captain-General.

Don Nicolas Duran y Chavez, resident of the Post of Atrisco, jurisdiction of the town of Albuquerque.

I appear before your Excellency asking that I may be allowed by the law, and by virtue of the Royal authority vested in you, and I say. That in the year 1738, last past on the occasion of the passage of the Senor General Don Enrique de Olavide y Michelena, your Excellency's predecessor, through the said town of Albuquerque, on his general inspection tour, on the day on which he stopped there I petitioned his Excellency in writing that he would in the name of His Majesty make me a grant of an uncultivated and vacant tract which is on the banks of the Rio del Norte, because of my being in possession of a stock of neat cattle and sheep, and not having any place on which to keep them, without damage to my neighbors and the Pueblo of Isleta.

Which petition was approved by the said General (and he told me) to maintain possession of the said tract in the best way that I could, until your Excellency should enter upon your governorship, for which reason I suspended my petition, and held it for this opportunity, in these terms, and as one of the original settlers of this Kingdom, and also because I am burdened with a family of nine male children, of sufficient age, and what is more not having (any place) whereupon to put my stock, exposed to total ruin and loss; will your Excellency in justice and grace in the name of his Majesty (Whom may God preserve) grant me the said tract on the banks of the Rio del Norte, the boun-



daries of which on the East from the said river, on the west the Rio Puerco, on the north the land of Captain Bernabel Baca, and on the south the lagoons (esteros) called San Pablo, because it is uncultivated and from time immemorial no one has been known as its owner; I registered it and took possession of it with imminent peril of my life; I built a cabin and placed my stock on it, and I have maintained the possession of it with considerable trouble and danger from the heathen, and if your Excellency will deign to make me a grant of said tract, (I beg that) your grace will also order that the Alcalde Mayor of the jurisdiction of Albuquerque shall put me in possession of it with the formalities prescribed by law — Wherefore:

I beg that your Excellency to do and determine as I have petitioned, in which I hope to receive benefit and grace, with justice.

Don Nicolas de Chavez.  
(Rubric.)

In the City of Santa Fe, on the first of June, of the year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty-Nine, I, Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Governor and Captain-General of this Kingdom of New Mexico, by his Majesty, having examined this petition, I have approved it, and in view of that which Don Nicolas de Chavez sets forth, contained in this writing, I make him a grant in the name of his Majesty of the tract of land which he asks for, for him, his children, heirs and successors in whom the better right may be vested by virtue of its having been presented to me that it is not to the prejudice of any third party, with the conditions and qualities that he must hold it as his Majesty directs in his royal order, and in virtue of this grant, the Alcalde Mayor of the town of Albuquerque, Juan Gonzales Bas, will put the said Don Nicolas de Chavez in possession of the said lands which he asks for, designating their boundaries thus I approved and ordered and signed with my assisting witnesses, acting by delegated authority in the absence of a Notary Royal or Public of which there is none in this Kingdom.



Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza  
(Rubric.)

Witness,

Diego de Vgartte,  
(Rubric.)

Joseph Terus,  
(Rubric.)



1746 CRIMINAL ACTION

PETITION FOR CRIMINAL PROSECUTION FILED  
BY DON JUAN DEL PINO, TRAVELING MERCHANT  
AND RESIDENT OF THIS KINGDOM OF  
NEW MEXICO

AGAINST

TWO GENIZARO INDIANS WHO LIVED IN THE  
PLACE CALLED BELEN WITHIN THE JURISDICTION  
OF THE VILLA OF SAN PHELIPE OF  
ALBUQUERQUERQUE (ALBUQUERQUE),  
ALLEGING THAT CERTAIN ITEMS (CLOTH,  
OTHER), WERE STOLEN FROM THE HOME  
OF DON JUAN MIGUEL ALBARES DEL CASTILLO  
IN WHICH HE STATES THE SAID ITEMS WERE  
STORED.

Translation by  
Tibo J. Chavez



Señor Gobernador (Governor) and Captain General  
Don Joachin Codallos y Rabal

Don Juan del Pino, resident and merchant of Mexico City, and a resident of this Kingdom of New Mexico, before His Majesty, in the most proper manner and form approved, and without any designs to confuse or mislead, hereby protests and states, that finding myself in a place called San Clemente of the Rio Abajo, in the Jurisdiction of the Villa of Albuquerque, with certain items of merchandise, and these having been sold, including leather goods, stockings, buffalo belts and other several items, natural products of the soil, and these same items having been stored in the home of Don Miguel Albares del Castillo, and on the 24th day of December, of last year of forty-six (1746), on the Vespers of the Nativity of our Lord, from the place called Belen, the Indian called "El Cuajo", that not having knowledge of his name, we call him by his alias, where he is better known, with another companion of his, whose name is Antonio El Pelon (Tony the bald-headed one), both from the Town of Belen, Genizaros, of the Yuiniendo Nation, of said place, at a very late hour of the night, and finding the household asleep, they went in the house of Don Miguel Albares del Castillo, through the door of the hallway, and going to the room where the merchandise was stored, they tore off the hasp and lock of the door, going into the room. They stole from me, for the first and second time, they stole 250 leather items bearing brand, 59 pair of hose, and having investigated as to who the delinquents were, I related some information, I called on the Royal Assistance and Royal Justice, and therefore, I called the Lieutenant of this jurisdiction, who is Miguel Luzero, and after he arrived I advised him of all that had transpired, and who were the thieves and the places and parts where they had been selling the stolen merchandise, which is a corrupt act, and in that manner, action was taken to take them prisoners. I gave him a horse and offered him to take the servants he desired in his company to follow the thieves. He answered that he had sufficient with one ser-



vant, who went with him, and having arrived at the home of the delinquents, one was taken prisoner, and he was tied with a rope, and he was turned over to the servant, alone, and he was told to take said prisoner, and the servant, leaving with the prisoner, the prisoner got loose and jumped into the river, and at the same time insulting the servant with abusive language, and this was the motive why he did not want to travel with the guard for security, and the Lieutenant having arrived, he asked the servant for the prisoner, and he answered that the prisoner had untied himself and jumped in the river, and from there they went after the other one and having arrived with him at my home, and getting him down, they took him inside the house, and then the Lieutenant started to examine him (the prisoner), and on examination he declared that twice he had come with El Cuajo to steal and that he knew that El Cuajo had been there with others for the same purpose of stealing. He then confessed as to the subjects to whom he had sold part of the loot, and that they had buried ten pair of hose and ten treated skins, and having stated the location, and then Captain Eusebio Rael and a servant of mine in company with the Lieutenant and having arrived at the place they found the hole where the loot had been buried, and also a ragged cured skin, and at the same time the prisoner was making the statements there was present the Honorable Francisco Juan Joseph Padilla, and Captain Bernave Baca, who stated that they would be glad to assist, as well as others present, and all the above having transpired, the Lieutenant asked me what I wanted him to do with the person of the prisoner. I ask your Most Honorable Majesty, what a frivolous and impertinent question. I finally replied, "Is it possible, Sir Lieutenant, that in view of the confession and guilt of the prisoner, you ask me what should be done with him?" I answered, "Lock him up and look for the other thief and proceed with the charges, and then, having sentenced them, the matter must be referred to the Governor so that His Majesty pass on the final judgment, and that I may be paid for my damage, and they shall be punished according to their crime." Then after he



listened to my suggestion, he answered that he had no jail. He then requested that we lock him in my room until he could be placed in prison, then he proceeded to execute the plan and locked him (the prisoner) in my room, where I had my merchandise, and he was kept there for two days, locked up, then at the end of said period, there arrived the Alcalde Mayor, Joseph Baca, and he took the prisoner with him up to Ysleta, and then, having the duty of placing him in prison, and having arrived with the prisoner at Ysleta, he set the prisoner free, and with this the (prisoner) was encouraged to proceed with more violations in the future, as would be expected, since the prisoner had been to the house and locked in the room, he obtained further knowledge as to all merchandise in said room, which I had stored, then they got on the top of the roof (azotea) of the house, they removed the dirt and grass on the roof and the brush below, and opened a hole in the roof through which they lowered themselves, and thereby removing 12 belts and 19 pair of hose, one hide, two cloths full of wool, one zenil, one-half measure of sugar, a small amount of chocolate, two pair of Indian-made boots (Gamusa) and about six loaves of bread. There may have been other items not noticed. It is difficult to assess all items taken, and having observed the injustice that had been done under the previous circumstances, and that no charges were placed or the matter brought to court proceedings, I thought it more appropriate to proceed to a higher tribunal so that I might be paid and they (the prisoners) punished. Therefore, I appeal for justice to Your Majesty, in order that a remedy may be granted to the instant case and that the Alcalde Joseph Baca be ordered to imprison said thieves, and by proper orders he escort them to this Capital of Santa Fe, and their confession be taken, and to whom they sold the merchandise, and the remainder be returned to me, and that they be required to pay for the missing merchandise stolen, and I finally ask Your Majesty to grant that this petition be granted in the name of justice, which I petition this High Tribunal in the good judgment of Your Majesty and that in all proper matters justice is granted, and that



same is filed without malice and in good conscience.

s/ Juan Joseph Pino  
(Rubrica)

## DECREE

In this Villa of Santa Fe on the 19th day of June, Year 1747, before me, the Captain General Don Joaquin Codallos y Rabal, Governor of this Kingdom of New Mexico, there was presented to me this petition as contained therein, and after review by me, I ordered Joseph Baca, Chief Alcalde (Mayor) of the Villa of Albuquerque, that he hear same and grant justice and that he use his authority in finding who is at fault, and that same be verified in proper judicial form, the existence or not of the alleged robbery, he shall take into custody the alleged thieves, and after making his findings shall refer the matter to his Superior Government (The Governor) and I have accordingly approved and ordered same, acting with two witnesses of my assistance, for lack of a Royal Notary Public, since there is none in this Kingdom — I give full faith.

s/ Joachin Codallos y Rabal  
(Rubrica)

s/ two witnesses

In this place of San Agustin of Ysleta, on the 26th day of June of the year 1747, I, Joseph Baca, Alcalde Mayor, and Captain General of this Jurisdiction, in compliance with that ordered by Captain General of this Kingdom, Don Joachin Codallos y Rabal, and I ordered Antonio Gonsales, Apache Indian, prisoner in the San Agustin jail, and I asked him if he knew the meaning of the oath and the sign of the Cross, and after making the Sign of the Cross, he promised to tell the truth in all that might be asked of him, and asking him if it is true he went to steal from Don Juan del Pino, he stated he went with El Cuajo, and that having arrived at the house, he stayed outside and El Cuajo went in the house, and asking him what he took out, he an-



swered "10 treated skins, and 10 pair of hose," that they returned a second time and took 10 pair of hose and ten treated skins, and that if they want more information they can get it from Diego Torres and other neighbors of Belen, who were witnesses to the fact that El Cuajo was the principal in this entire affair, and asking him (the prisoner) what part of the loot did he get, he said he got two skins and his wife one skin, and a pair of hose for his wife, and he said these were sold to the subjects mentioned (Diego Torres, et al) and asking him if others participated in the robbery, he said no, only he and El Cuajo were responsible, and that he does not want the Devil to take him for acting as false witness against others, and he further stated El Cuajo sold the items stolen and then gambled the amount he received in payment, and he repeated once, twice, and thrice, that the above was truth and he did not know how to sign his name, and I signed same with the witnesses of my assistance.

s/ Geronimo de Zereallos

s/ Joseph Baca

s/ B                      Tome



## COURT ORDER — 1747

The enclosed file is transmitted to His Majesty the Governor, for his determination and action.

s/ Juan Miguel Albares del Castillo

s/ Joseph Baca  
(Rubrica)

In the Villa of Santa Fe, on the 30th day of the month of June, 1747, the Captain General and Governor of the Jurisdiction of New Mexico, Don Joaquin Codallos y Rabal, in view of the judicial proceedings have proceeded, and the transmittal of all the proceedings of this Superior Tribunal, I therefore order, and it is hereby ordered, that this matter is again referred to the local Tribunal (Alcalde) for further justification and clarification as to the facts of the robbery, particularly as to the number of cured hides (gamusas) alleged stolen from the petitioner, since the only proof to date is the allegation made by the petitioner, and it is obvious there is a great disparity in the number of hides allegedly stolen as stated in the petition, and the confession made by the prisoner. I, therefore, order that additional information be taken from the Indian El Cuajo at the Indian prison, and that a statement be taken from said Indian as to the items taken in the alleged robbery to whom the merchandise was sold and at what price, if the same was sold at private or public sale, also, that all purchasers of the merchandise be examined and they be required to make statements relative thereto, and also that charges may be filed against those that may be involved and accordingly taken prisoners, and that he (the Alcalde) use his judgment in said proceedings and after the charges have been substantiated by proceedings, then the entire matter shall be resubmitted to this Superior Tribunal to take further judicial action, and that all proceedings be executed with proper witnesses, for lack of Royal Notary Public.

s/ Joaquin Codallos y Rabal

Signed by two witnesses



In this Pueblo of San Agustin of Ysleta, on the 3rd day of the month of August of 1747, Capt. Joseph Baca, Alcalde Mayor of the Villa of Albuquerque, of said town and jurisdiction, in compliance with that ordered by the Captain General, Governor Joaquin Codallos y Rabal, I ordered to appear before me Don Juan del Pino, the petitioner, and he was notified by me and two witnesses who were Francisco Padillo and Nicolas Aragon, and having made known to him (Pino) the additional information requested by the Governor, because many hides he had bought in loose lots, and hose had been purchased at various sales, and some he had purchased from the Yutes (Indians), and these were not included in the books of account, and the Indian El Cuajo will go to the Indian prison, since he cannot be located anywhere and there is no notice of his whereabouts, and having again asked the prisoner, Antonio (Antonio El Pelon) to who or whom did he sell the part of the loot he received, he replied that he and his wife, as stated before, received four cured skins (gamusas) and some hose, and that they had been disposed of as follows: 1 to Ignacio Barrera, 1 to Joaquin de Luna, 1 to Pablo Salazar, 1 to an Indian at Ysleta, and his wife made shoes from one — and having required the aforesaid to appear before me and advising them that they were charged as accomplices to the robbery, since they had purchased same from a free person, and under no knowledge that they were stolen and that they were purchased at a public sale and for a just price, and this concluded the interrogation, since this is all the information that could be obtained, and they swore to the truth of the aforesaid. I therefore executed the above with my signature and that of two witnesses of my assistance — since there is no Royal Notary Public.

s/ Joseph Baca  
(Rubrica)

Witnesses:

s/ Nicolas Aragon  
s/ Francisco Padilla



In accordance with the instructions given to me as Alcalde Mayor, I hereby transmit the entire file on this day, month and year on the matter of Juan Pino and the petitioner on file; and said Juan Pino is given an additional three days from date to supply additional information requested (by the Governor) in this matter, he (Pino) has been accordingly advised.

s/ Joseph Baca  
Judge-Alcalde  
(Rubrica)

Witnesses:

s/ Nicolas Aragon  
(Rubrica)

s/ Francisco Padilla  
(Rubrica)

Hon. Alcalde Mayor, having been advised and understanding the contents of your order, I must answer same before the Superior Tribunal (Governor), I have accordingly signed this statement of the 5th day of August, 1747.

s/ Juan Joseph Pino  
(Rubrica)

On this 5th day of August, 1747, I, Joseph Baca, Alcalde Mayor of the Villa of Albuquerque, hereby send the file in the subject matter in accordance with instructions in order that Your Majesty in his wisdom determine the proper action to be taken in the premises, I have signed same with witnesses of my assistance.

s/ Joseph Baca  
Judge (Rubrica)

s/ Geronimo de Zavillos  
s/ Romero



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